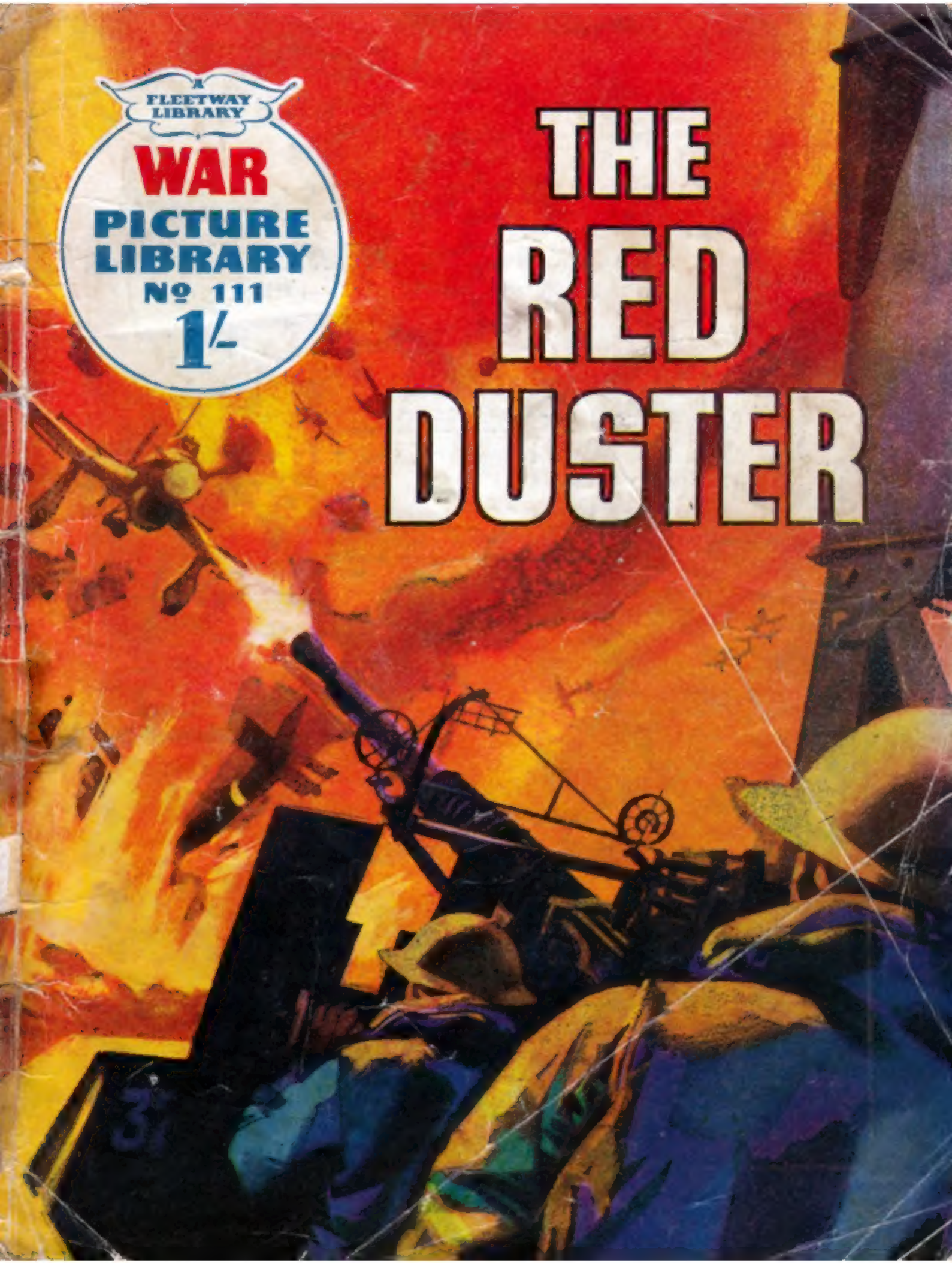
A FLEETWAY LIBRARY

WAR PICTURE LIBRARY

No 111

1/-

THE RED DUSTER



4 ALL-ACTION ISSUES EVERY MONTH

★ No. 21 **THE MARK OF THE BEAST**
An evil enemy must be fought—to the death !

★ No. 22 **FORT BLOOD**
A ghastly secret was locked in the fortress of doom !

★ No. 23 **DAY OF WRATH**
Every shattered strongpoint was a milestone to victory !

★ No. 24 **SHOOT FIRST . . .**
To stay alive took cold nerve—and a quick trigger !

BATTLE PICTURE LIBRARY

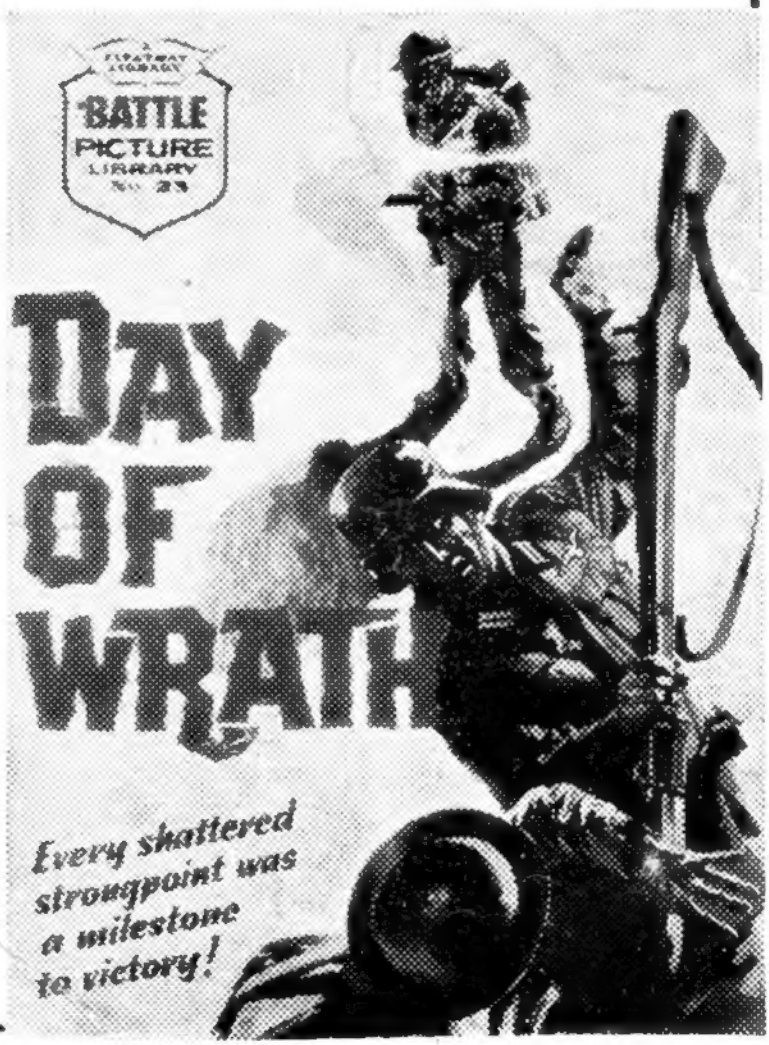
On Sale

Monday, 21st August

MAKE SURE

Order your copies

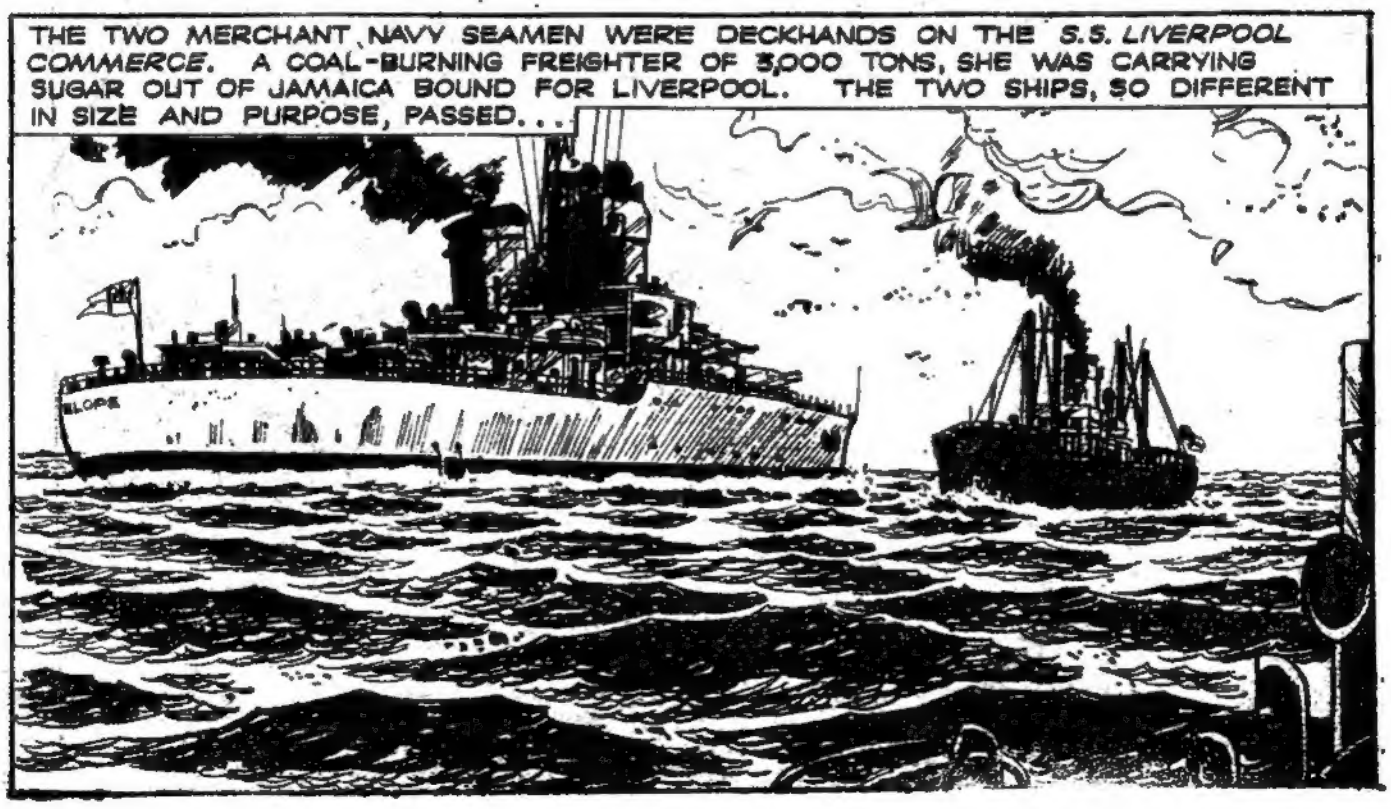
NOW !



The RED DUSTER

© *Fleetway Publications Ltd., 1961*

Chapter 1. DANGER from the DEEP



THE ANTAGONISM BETWEEN THE MERCHANT SERVICE AND THE ROYAL NAVY HAD GROWN UNCHECKED IN PEACETIME YEARS. THE SALTY MEN OF THE MERCHANT SERVICE FELT NOTHING BUT CONTEMPT FOR THE ROYAL NAVY'S SPIT AND POLISH. ON THE BRIDGE OF THE *LIVERPOOL COMMERCE*...
STOP GAWKING AT THAT FLOATING GIN PALACE, BOY! ARE YOU TAKING THE FORENOON WATCH OR SIGHTSEEING?

THIRD OFFICER JOHNNY JOHNSON HAD BEEN IMPRESSED DESPITE HIMSELF BY THE SLEEK POWER OF THAT GREAT WARSHIP.
SORRY, SIR! SHE LOOKED PRETTY FINE, THOUGH, DIDN'T SHE, SIR?
FINE, HE SAYS! IF YOUR FATHER COULD BE HEARING YOU SAY THAT, JOHNSON MY BOY, HE'D TAKE A BELT TO YOU! OLD CAP'N JOHNSON THOUGHT NO MORE OF HIS MAJESTY'S NAVY THAN I DO! YOU JUST FORGET THOSE GOLD-LACED SWELLS AND KEEP THIS WORKING SHIP ON HER COURSE FOR THE AZORES!

JOHNNY JOHNSON'S FATHER HAD ONCE COMMANDED THE OLD *LIVERPOOL COMMERCE*. ITS PRESENT CAPTAIN HAD BEEN HIS FIRST MATE. NOW THE VETERAN SEAMAN HAD RETIRED TO HIS NATIVE CITY AND HIS SON WAS A YOUNG — AND OPEN-MINDED — THIRD OFFICER.

'HAVEN'T DONE A DAY'S WORK IN TWENTY YEARS', THAT'S WHAT DAD USED TO SAY ABOUT THE ROYAL NAVY! STILL, I'LL MAKE UP MY MIND ABOUT THAT WHEN THIS OLD WAR STARTS...IF IT'S GOING TO...

EVEN AS THE RUSTY BOWS OF THE *LIVERPOOL COMMERCE* LIFTED TO THE OCEAN SWELL, MOMENTOUS EVENTS WERE SWEEPING FAR-AWAY EUROPE. TWO DAYS AFTER THAT INCIDENT IN KINGSTON, JAMAICA, THE WIRELESS AERIALS ON THE ADMIRALTY ROOF IN LONDON SPARKED INTO URGENT ACTIVITY...

THE WAR HAD STARTED. NOW THE LONG-PREPARED PLAN FOR A DEFENSIVE BATTLE AGAINST THE GERMAN U-BOATS WAS PUT INTO EFFECT. FROM LONDON, SIGNALS WERE BEAMED TO BRITISH SHIPS IN EVERY CORNER OF THE HIGH SEAS.

THE WIRELESS AERIALS OF THE *LIVERPOOL COMMERCE* IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC PICKED UP THAT MORSE SIGNAL AND FED IT INTO THE EARPHONES OF THE RADIO OPERATOR IN HIS CABIN UNDER THE BRIDGE.
WHAT'S UP, SPARKS?
THE BALLOON, PETE! HITLER'S INVADED POLAND AND WE'VE DECLARED WAR ON GERMANY! GET THIS SIGNAL TO THE SKIPPER — IT'S FROM THE ADMIRALTY, URGENT!

THE ORDERS FROM THE ADMIRALTY WERE SHARP AND PEREMPTORY. THEY BROUGHT AN OBSTINATE SCOWL TO THE WEATHERBEATEN FACE OF CAPTAIN ALFRED PEARCE.
LOOK AT THIS! THEY'VE STARTED ORDERING US AROUND ALREADY! PROCEED TO HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA AND JOIN EASTBOUND CONVOY! WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT! TELL SPARKS TO JOIN ME ON THE BRIDGE!
RIGHT, CAP'N!

SEND A SIGNAL TO THE ADMIRALTY, SPARKS! ASK THEM WHAT THE DEVIL THEY MEAN BY TELLING ME TO CHANGE COURSE? TELL THEM —
NO CAN DO, SIR! THEY'VE IMPOSED RADIO SILENCE. JERRY U-BOATS MIGHT GET A FIX ON ANY SHIP WHICH USES ITS TRANSMITTER!
RADIO SILENCE, EH? SO THE NAVY BIG-SHOTS CAN'T KNOW IF WE'RE OBEYING THEIR ORDER. OR EVEN IF WE'VE RECEIVED IT! I WONDER...
WITH A SUDDEN SHARP AUTHORITY, THE VETERAN SEAMAN TURNED TO HIS OFFICERS. HIS VOICE WAS BELLIGERENT.
SPARKS, YOUR RADIO BROKE DOWN JUST AFTER WE LEFT KINGSTON! YOU'VE NEVER RECEIVED ANY ORDER FROM LONDON, GET ME? THE OLD COMMERCE IS GOING TO LIVERPOOL UNDER HER OWN STEAM! STEADY ON YOUR COURSE, HELMSMAN!
STEADY IT IS, CAP'N!

THERE WAS JUST AN EDGE OF EXCITEMENT IN JOHNNY JOHNSON'S VOICE AS HE WALKED ALONG THE DECK WITH THE RADIO OPERATOR.
DO YOU THINK THERE **ARE** ANY U-BOATS THIS FAR WEST, SPARKS?
I DOUBT IT, JOHNNY! IF THERE ARE, THEY'D BETTER STEER CLEAR OF THE OLD MAN IN HIS PRESENT MOOD! WE'RE SAFER ON OUR OWN WITH HIM ON THE BRIDGE THAN IF WE WERE IN CONVOY!

IN THE NEXT TWENTY-FOUR HOURS, THE *LIVERPOOL COMMERCE* HELD HER LONELY COURSE EASTWARDS ACROSS THE SOUTH ATLANTIC. WAR HAD COME TO THE WORLD, BUT THE HARSH SMELL OF DEATH HAD NOT YET REACHED THIS WINDY DESERT OF SEA AND SKY.

BUT THE SALT-CAKED FREIGHTER WAS NOT QUITE ALONE: THE BEAT OF HER SCREWS SENT A PULSE THROUGH THE GREEN DEPTHS UNDER HER RUSTY HULL AND TEN MILES AWAY, THE NEEDLE OF A DELICATE INSTRUMENT FLICKERED INTO STEALTHY LIFE.

U-73, RECALLED TO GERMANY AT THE OUTBREAK OF WAR FROM A PEACETIME LONG-RANGE ENDURANCE CRUISE TO THE CARIBBEAN, TURNED HUNGRILY TOWARDS THAT CONTACT ON HER HYDROPHONE. A LONE BRITISH SHIP IN THESE WATERS WOULD BE AN EASY FIRST BLOOD.
U-73

ON THE BRIDGE OF THE *COMMERCE*, THIRD OFFICER JOHNNY JOHNSON WAS TAKING THE AFTERNOON WATCH. THE WEATHER WAS GOOD, THE SEA CALM, BUT SOME SIXTH SENSE KEPT THE YOUNG SEAMAN ON THE ALERT.

SUDDENLY....

HALLO, THAT'S ODD...

A GLINT OF SUNLIGHT EIGHT HUNDRED YARDS TO STARBOARD CAUGHT THE YOUNG THIRD OFFICER'S EYE. CURIOUSLY, HE FOCUSED HIS BINOCULARS ...

THE SMOOTH TRACK OF A RUNNING TORPEDO WAS RACING RELENTLESSLY TOWARDS THE FREIGHTER'S BOWS.

THAT GLINT OF SUNLIGHT HAD BEEN THE REFLECTION FROM THE U-BOAT'S PERISCOPE.

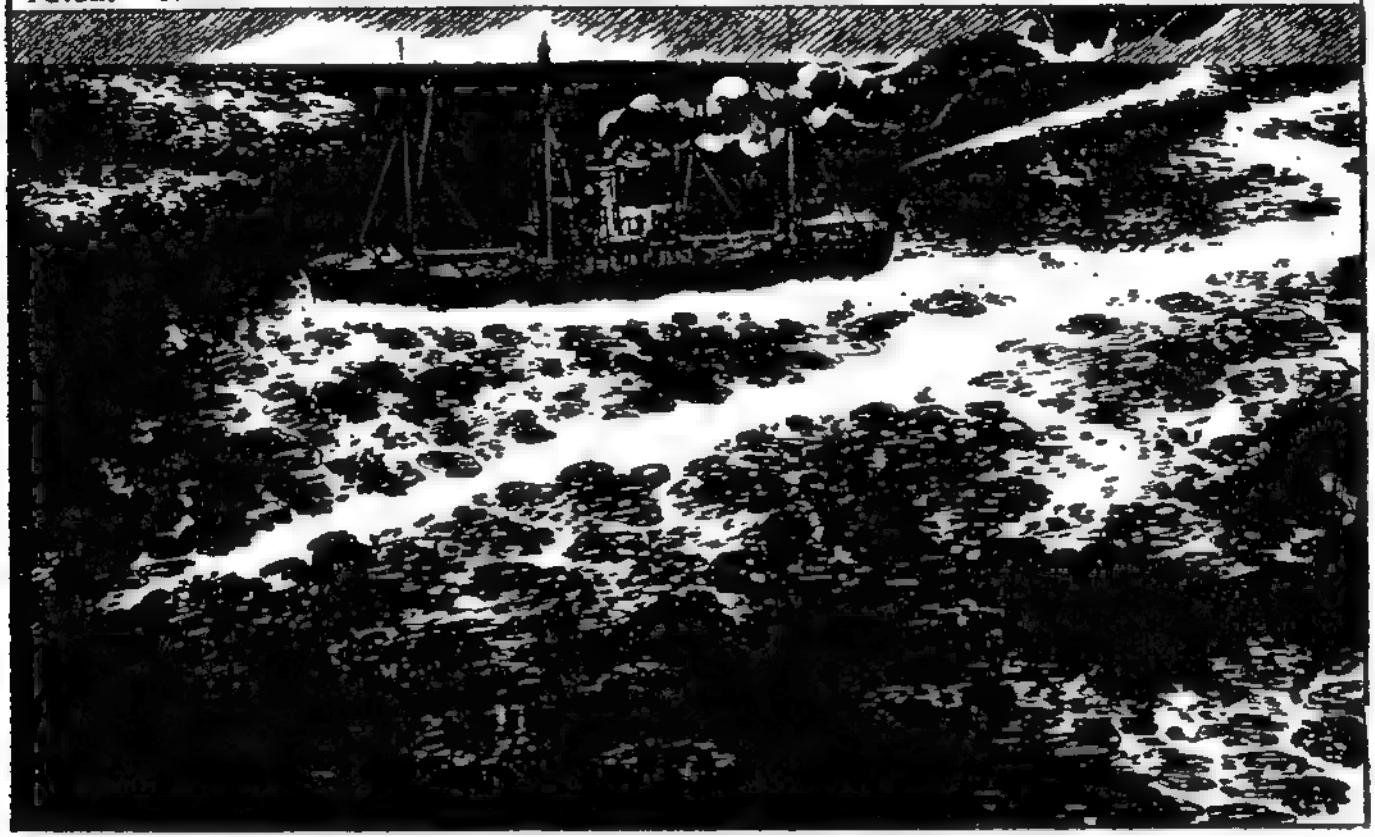
TORPEDO TO STARBOARD! HARD-A-PORT!

HARD A-PORT!

THE FREIGHTER WAS SLOW AND UNWIELDY, BUT JOHNNY'S QUICK THINKING HAD GIVEN HER PRECIOUS SECONDS TO MANOEUVRE IN. PONDEROUSLY, HER BOWS SWUNG TO PORT AS THE TORPEDO LUNGED AT HER THROUGH THE CALM WATER. JOHNNY HELD HIS BREATH...
MISSED US!

THE TORPEDO HAD HISSED PAST WITHIN INCHES OF THE FREIGHTER'S BOWS. A MOMENT LATER THE DRY-MOUTHED JOHNNY TURNED TO FACE HIS CAPTAIN AS HE CAME PANTING ON TO THE BRIDGE.
A U-BOAT'S HAVING A GO AT US, CAP'N! FIRST TORPEDO'S MISSED!
GOOD WORK, JOHNNY! NOW BRING THE OLD GIRL BACK TO STARBOARD, SHARP! THE NEXT FISH WILL COME AT OUR STERN IF I KNOW THOSE PLAMING FRITZES!

CAPTAIN ALFRED PEARCE HAD SERVED AT SEA DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR. NOW SOME OF THE OLD BITTER LESSONS CAME BACK TO HIM AND PUT AN EDGE ON HIS VOICE. SLOWLY THE *LIVERPOOL COMMERCE* CLAWED ROUND AGAIN TO STARBOARD.



AS THE SHREWD OLD SEAMAN HAD FORECAST, THE SECOND TORPEDO WAS AIMED AT THE FREIGHTER'S STERN! ONCE AGAIN THAT DEADLY RACE BETWEEN THE LETHAL WARHEAD AND THE TIRED ENGINES OF THE OLD SHIP WAS AGONISINGLY PLAYED OUT...

ON THE FREIGHTER'S BRIDGE, THE OFFICERS SMILED DAZEDLY AT EACH OTHER AND BREATHED AGAIN. BUT CAPTAIN PEARCE WAS ALREADY MAKING HIS NEXT CALCULATED MOVE...
IF I KNOW FRITZ, HE WON'T WASTE ANY MORE TORPEDOES—HE'LL SURFACE AND SHELL US! WELL, WE'LL BE READY FOR HIM! HELMSMAN, BRING HER ROUND TO STARBOARD AND STAND BY FOR ORDERS!

THE WILY OLD CAPTAIN HAD GUESSED RIGHT. A THOUSAND YARDS AWAY ON THE STARBOARD BEAM, THE SEA BOILED AS THE HIDDEN U-BOAT BEGAN TO SURFACE.
U-13

THE OLD FREIGHTER HAD ALREADY STEADIED ON HER COURSE WHEN THE U-BOAT SHOOK HERSELF FROM THE WATER.. SLOW AND UNWIELDY AS THE COMMERCE WAS, SURPRISE MIGHT YET ALLOW HER CAPTAIN'S INCREDIBLY BELLIGERENT PLAN TO WORK...
COME ON, OLD GIRL, COME ON! WE'VE GOT TO RAM FRITZ BEFORE HE GETS THAT GUN TO BEAR ON US!
SIR— LOOK!

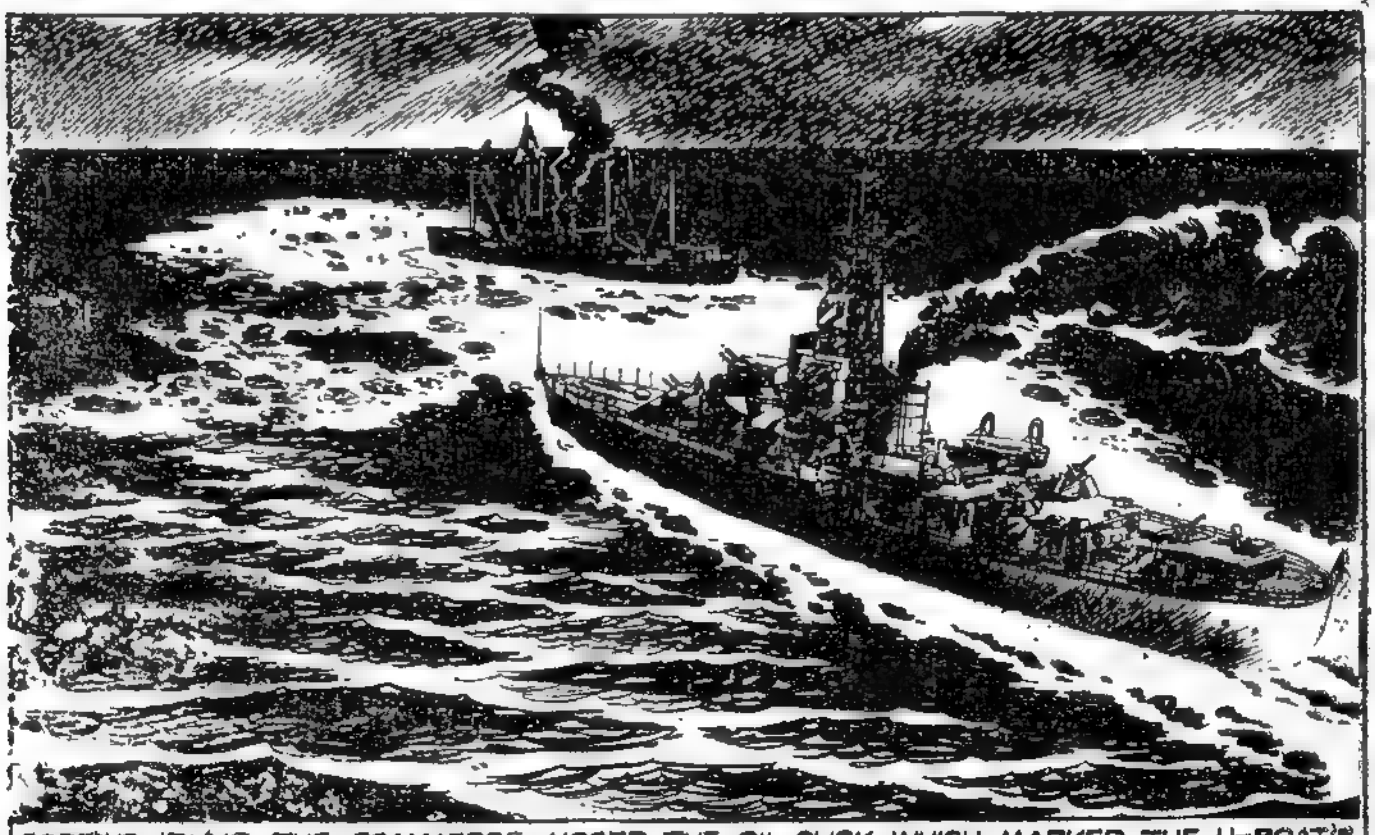
BUT FATE WAS TO DENY CAPTAIN ALFRED PEARCE THE CHANCE TO PIT HIS TOUGH OLD SHIP AGAINST HIS UNDERWATER ADVERSARY....FATE IN THE SHAPE OF THE ROYAL NAVY HE SO HEARTILY DESPISED.
TO STARBOARD, CAP'N! IT'S THAT CRUISER WE SAW IN KINGSTON!
SHE'S SHELLING THE U-BOAT!

RACING UP FROM THE SOUTH WEST, H.M.S. *ANTELOPE* HAD SIGHTED THE U-BOAT ON THE SURFACE AND OPENED FIRE WITH HER SIX-INCH GUNS. TO HER WIRY LITTLE CAPTAIN, THE VALIANT OLD *LIVERPOOL COMMERCE* WAS JUST AN IRRITATING INTRUDER IN THE LINE OF FIRE...

HER DELICATE INSTRUMENTS COMPUTING THE RAPIDLY DECREASING RANGE, THE *ANTELOPE'S* SIX INCH GUNS FLUNG ANOTHER SALVO OF SHELLS ACROSS THE CALM WATER. EVEN AS THE U-BOAT PREPARED TO CRASH-DIVE IN THE FACE OF THIS UNEXPECTED ATTACK...
U-73

THE U-BOAT WAS ALMOST TORN OUT OF THE WATER BY THE SHATTERING IMPACT OF THAT SINGLE DIRECT HIT. BUT ON THE BRIDGE OF THE OLD FREIGHTER...
SHE'S GOING DOWN, SIR!
CURSE THOSE INTERFERING NAVY WALLAHS!

PERHAPS THE CRUISER'S INTERVENTION HAD SAVED THE *COMMERCE* FROM DESTRUCTION, BUT CAPTAIN ALFRED PEARCE WOULD NEVER ADMIT IT. HE HAD HIS OWN VIEW OF THE SITUATION—A FURIOUS AND FRUSTRATED ONE.



SCREWS IDLING, THE *COMMERCE* NOSED THE OIL SLICK WHICH MARKED THE U-BOAT'S WATERY GRAVE. LIKE A GREY GHOST, HER BRASSWORK PAINTED OUT AND HER FINERY STRIPPED, THE CRUISER CLOSED WITH THE OLD FREIGHTER.

THIRD OFFICER JOHNSON, WATCHING EVENTS FROM THE BRIDGE OF THE *COMMERCE*, FELT SOMETHING SINISTER IN THE SILENT APPROACH OF THE GREAT GREY WARSHIP.
WHAT ARE THEY DOING, CAP'N ?
WHAT DOES THE NAVY ALWAYS DO, JOHNNY MY BOY? PUSHES HONEST SEAMEN LIKE YOU AND ME AROUND !

A SMALL PINNACE WAS LOWERED FROM THE *ANTELOPE'S* DECK. AS IT SHOT ACROSS THE PLACID SEA BETWEEN THE TWO SHIPS, CAPTAIN ALFRED PEARCE CLIMBED GRUMBLINGLY DOWN TO THE DECK TO GREET HIS NAVAL VISITOR.
CAPTAIN SIMS' COMPLIMENTS, MASTER, AND HE WANTS TO KNOW WHAT THE DEVIL YOU'RE DOING HERE!
OH, HE DOES, DOES HE ?

THE YOUNG NAVAL OFFICER TOOK A CHEERFULLY DISRESPECTFUL ATTITUDE, WHICH ROUSED CAPTAIN PEARCE TO A FURY.
YOU TELL YOUR CAPTAIN SIMS FROM ME THAT I'M HERE BECAUSE I WANT TO BE! WHAT'S MORE, HE CAN KEEP THAT FLOATING GIN PALACE OF HIS OUT OF MY WAY IN FUTURE! I HAD THAT FRITZY SUBMARINE ALL LINED UP!
HERE, I SAY, SIR!
IF WE HADN'T PRANGED THAT U-BOAT YOU'D BE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA NOW, CAPTAIN!
WHY, YOU YOUNG PUPPY, WE'D HAVE SLICED FRITZ IN HALF. THE DAY I NEED THE ROYAL NAVY TO HELP ME, YOU CAN SEW ME UP IN A TARPAULIN AND DUMP ME OVERBOARD—I'LL BE DEAD!
SLOWLY THE VETERAN SEAMAN'S FURY DIED DOWN TO A SARDONIC GROWL.
THE FACT REMAINS, CAPTAIN, THAT YOU SHOULD BE TWENTY-FOUR HOURS NEARER HALIFAX THAN YOU ARE! FROM NOW ON YOU SAIL IN CONVOY! YOU CAN'T GO IT ALONE, YOU KNOW, IN A WAR LIKE THIS ONE'S GOING TO BE!
WELL, HAPPEN YOU'RE RIGHT, YOUNG MAN! ESCORT THE LIEUTENANT TO HIS TOY BOAT, MISTER JOHNSON!

SHREWD AS HE WAS, THE OLD CAPTAIN KNEW THAT THIS FRESH-FACED YOUNGSTER WAS SPEAKING THE TRUTH. NO UNARMED MERCHANT SHIP COULD FACE THE UNDERWATER MENACE OF THE U-BOATS ALONE. WELL PLEASED WITH THE SUCCESS OF HIS MISSION, THE LIEUTENANT GRINNED...
THAT'S A HOARY OLD FIRE-EATER YOU'VE GOT THERE, FRIEND! WHAT DO YOU FEED HIM ON, SEA COAL?
SEE HERE, MISTER LIEUTENANT...

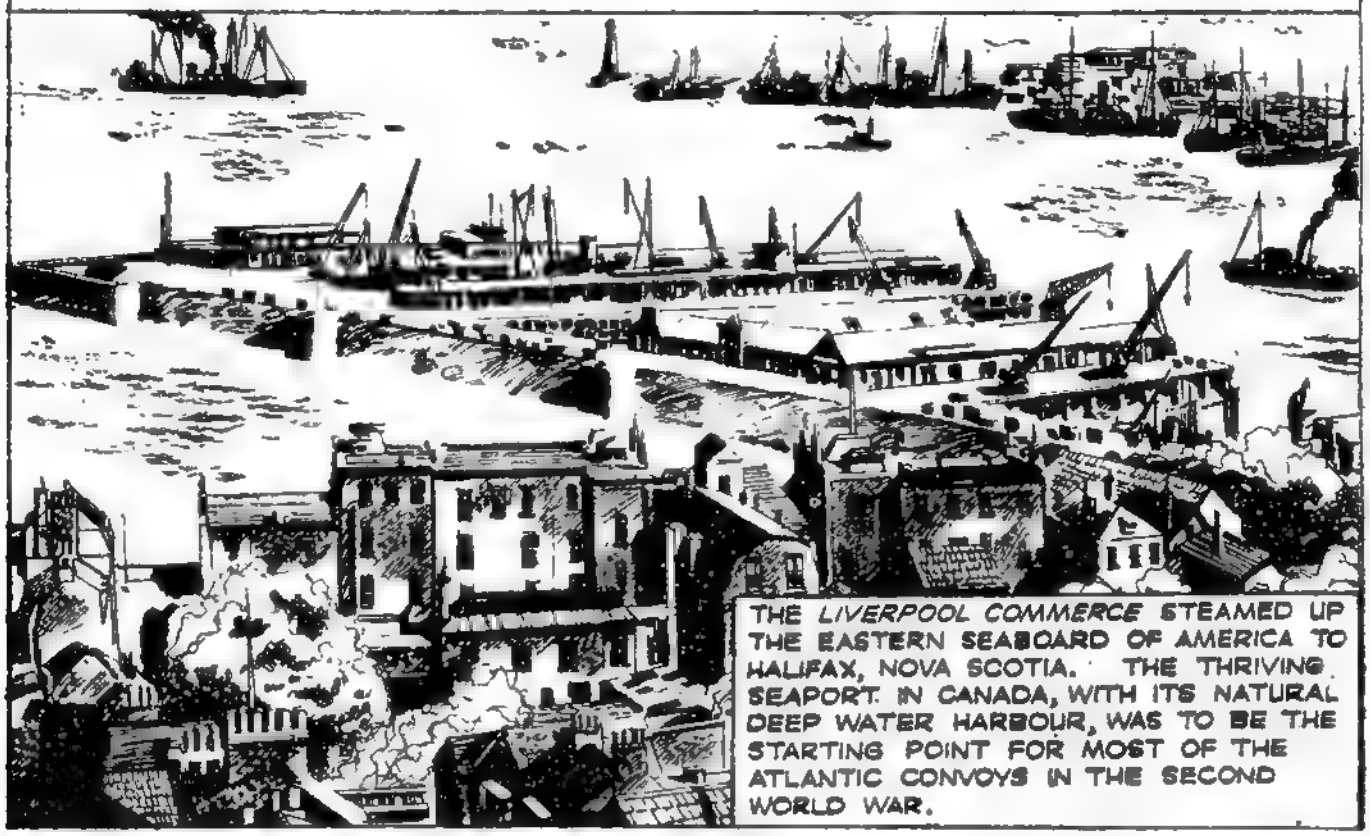
SUDDENLY THE OPEN-MINDED THIRD MATE WAS FILLED WITH A VIOLENT DISLIKE FOR THIS SUPERIOR OFFICER AND THE LORDLY SERVICE HE REPRESENTED.
CAPTAIN PEARCE IS WORTH A DOZEN OF YOU SMART ALEC NAVY TYPES ANY DAY! AND WHILE YOU'RE ON HIS SHIP, TREAT HIM WITH RESPECT, OR I'LL THROW YOU IN THE SEA, MISTER COCKY LIEUTENANT!

THE NAVY LIEUTENANT'S FACE WORE A WRY SMILE AS THE PINNACE WHISKED HIM BACK TO HIS SHIP.
WELL, WELL! YOU'D THINK THE MERCHANT SERVICE WAS AT WAR WITH THE ROYAL NAVY INSTEAD OF THE JERRIES!

ON THE BRIDGE OF THE *LIVERPOOL COMMERCE*, THE CAPTAIN GAVE THE INEVITABLE ORDER TO HIS SULLEN OFFICERS....
ALL RIGHT, MISTER JOHNSON, WE'D BEST DO AS THE NAVY TELLS US! SET COURSE FOR HALIFAX!
AYE AYE, CAP'N!

THE 'OLD FREIGHTER TURNED HEAVILY AWAY AND PLODDED NORTH. ON THE DECK OF THE GREAT WARSHIP, A WISE MAN WATCHED HER GO.
THEY'RE GOOD MEN THOSE, COMMANDER, FOR ALL THEY HATE OUR INNARDS! LET'S HOPE WE LEARN TO WORK TOGETHER BEFORE THE SHOOTING MATCH REALLY STARTS!

Chapter 2. CONVOY COMMANDER



AS THE VETERAN SEAMAN PREPARED TO GO ASHORE FOR HIS ORDERS, A STOCKY AND GRIZZLED OLD MAN CAME STUMPING UP THE GANGWAY TO THE DECK OF THE *LIVERPOOL COMMERCE*. HIS VOICE HAD A RING OF AUTHORITY IN IT.

CAPTAIN PEARCE, ISN'T IT? MY NAME'S OWEN! I'M COMMODORE OF THE CONVOY YOU'LL BE JOINING FOR THE EAST-BOUND CROSSING. I'M SAILING IN YOUR SHIP!

YOU ARE, ARE YOU?

CAPTAIN PEARCE EYED THE STOCKY MAN WITHOUT ENTHUSIASM. THIS WAS GOING TO BE A LONG, HARD WAR, HE THOUGHT BITTERLY, BUT HE HAD BETTER MAKE THE BEST OF IT.

I'VE ONLY JUST DOCKED, MISTER OWEN! YOU'LL FORGIVE ME, BUT I'VE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE DOING ON MY SHIP!

YOU WERE LATE ARRIVING, CAPTAIN, OR YOU'D HAVE BEEN BRIEFED WITH THE OTHER MASTERS! HAD A SPOT OF BOTHER COMING UP FROM THE CARIBBEAN, DIDN'T YOU?

WITH MUTUAL SUSPICION THE MERCHANT NAVY CAPTAIN AND THE NAVY COMMODORE WENT BELOW. NOW IT WAS THIRD OFFICER JOHNSON'S TURN TO GREET AN UNWELCOME GUEST ON THE OLD COMMERCE.
SPOT OF BOTHER, HE SAYS! YOU NEARLY COPPED A PACKET FROM A JERRY U-BOAT, DIDN'T YOU, MATE?
NO WE DIDN'T! I'D TELL YOU ABOUT IT, BUT I WOULDN'T EXPECT THE NAVY TO UNDERSTAND! WHAT'S HAPPENING, ANYWAY?

THE LEADING SIGNALMAN TOOK JOHNNY'S ILL-HUMOUR IN GOOD PART. HE GRINNED APOLOGETICALLY.
NO OFFENCE MEANT, MATE! I'M ON THE COMMODORE'S STAFF, SEE? SIGNALMAN TED YOUNG, THAT'S ME!
OH WELL, I SUPPOSE THE NAVY KNOWS WHAT IT'S DOING! I'LL FIND OUT WHERE YOU CAN STOW YOUR GEAR!

JOHNNY TOOK THE NAVY SIGNALMAN TO THE JUNIOR OFFICERS' MESS FORRARD. MEANWHILE THE TWO VETERANS WERE FACING EACH OTHER WITH A HOSTILITY WHICH A DRINK COULD NOT SOFTEN.
YOU'RE IN COMMAND OF YOUR SHIP, CAPTAIN, AND I'M IN COMMAND OF THE WHOLE CONVOY, YOURSELF INCLUDED! THAT'S THE POSITION! IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR US BOTH TO DO OUR JOBS ON THE SAME BRIDGE WITHOUT TREADING ON EACH OTHER'S CORNS!
OH AYE, IT'S POSSIBLE, COMMODORE!

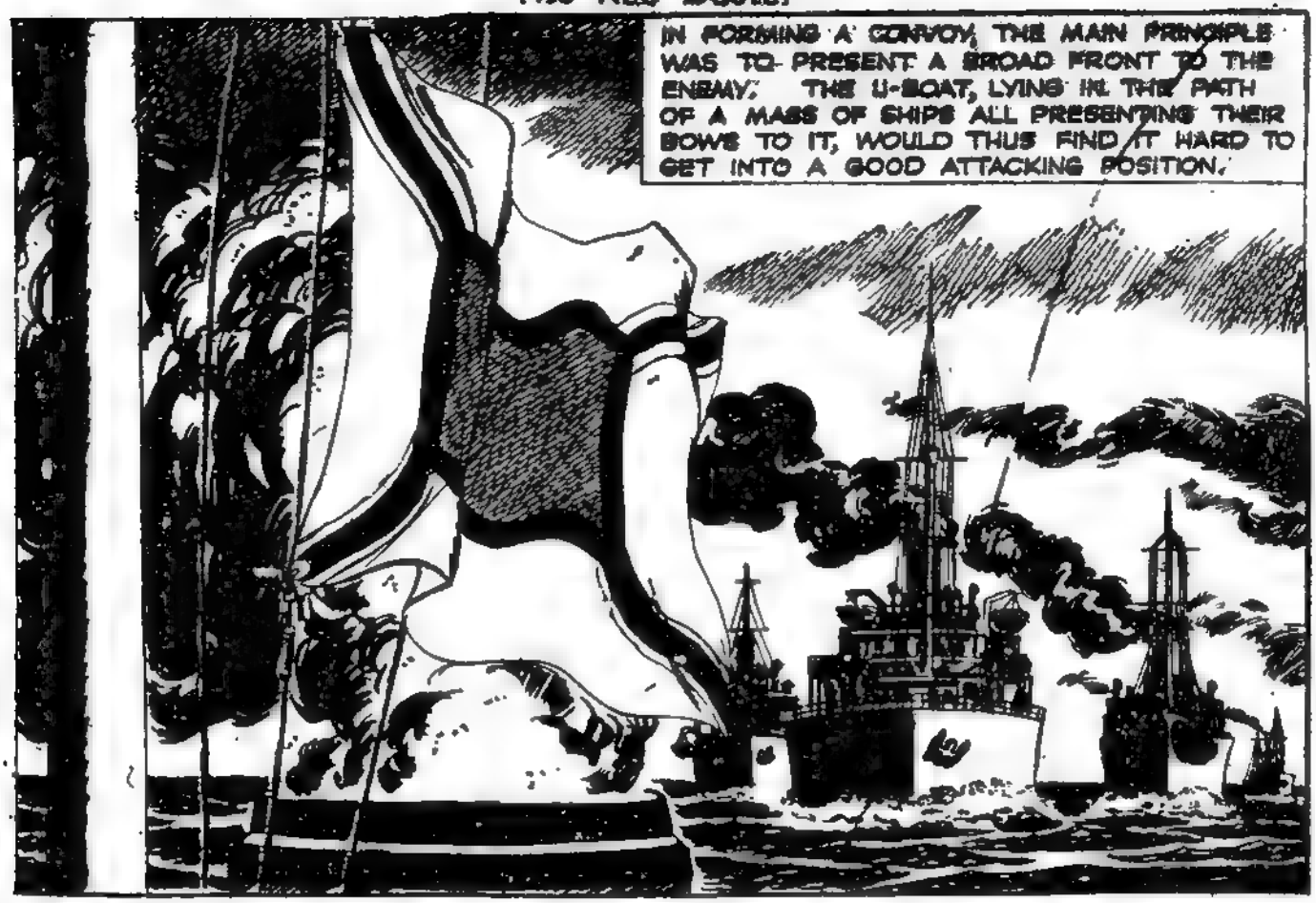
AFTER TWENTY FOUR HOURS OF HURRIED COALING AND PROVISIONING, THE OLD *COMMERCE* WAS READY FOR THE SEA. SHE WAS TO LEAD THE CONVOY OUT OF HARBOUR.
CAST OFF FORRARD! CAST OFF AFT! HAVE YOU GOT ANY ORDERS TO GIVE, COMMODORE, BEFORE WE SAIL?
NO ORDERS, CAPTAIN! NOT TILL THE CONVOY FORMS UP BEYOND SAMBRO ISLAND!

ON THE FREIGHTER'S BRIDGE, THE CAPTAIN'S VEILED SARCASM SOON DREW A SHARP REJOINDER FROM THE VETERAN NAVAL OFFICER...
I SUPPOSE YOU HAVE TAKEN A SHIP TO SEA, IN YOUR TIME, MISTER OWEN ?
FOR YOUR INFORMATION, CAPTAIN PEARCE, I RETIRED FROM THE ROYAL NAVY AS A REAR ADMIRAL! IT WAS THE ADMIRALTY'S IDEA TO BRING OLD NAVY MEN LIKE MYSELF BACK TO SEA AS COMMODORES, ROYAL NAVAL RESERVE!

THE TWO YOUNGSTERS HAD BEEN WATCHING THE BATTLE BETWEEN THEIR SENIOR OFFICERS. IT LOOKED AS THOUGH TWO GENERATIONS OF SEAMEN WOULD SOON BE AT EACH OTHER'S THROATS.
ONE UP TO THE COMMODORE EH, MATE ?
HMS
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN!

CONVOY E-THREE-ZERO CONSISTED OF FORTY SIX FREIGHTERS. AT THAT STAGE OF THE WAR, NO WARSHIPS COULD BE SPARED TO ESCORT CONVOYS AS FAR AS THE AMERICAN SEABOARD. THE CONVOY'S RENDEZVOUS WITH ITS NAVAL ESCORT WAS IN MID-ATLANTIC.

AS THE SHIPS OF THE CONVOY STEAMED IN LINE AHEAD CLEAR OF THE APPROACHES TO HALIFAX, THE COMMODORE ON THE *COMMERCE'S* BRIDGE PREPARED TO GIVE THE SIGNAL TO FORM CONVOY POSITIONS.


IN FORMING A CONVOY, THE MAIN PRINCIPLE WAS TO PRESENT A BROAD FRONT TO THE ENEMY. THE U-BOAT, LYING IN THE PATH OF A MASS OF SHIPS ALL PRESENTING THEIR BOWS TO IT, WOULD THUS FIND IT HARD TO GET INTO A GOOD ATTACKING POSITION.

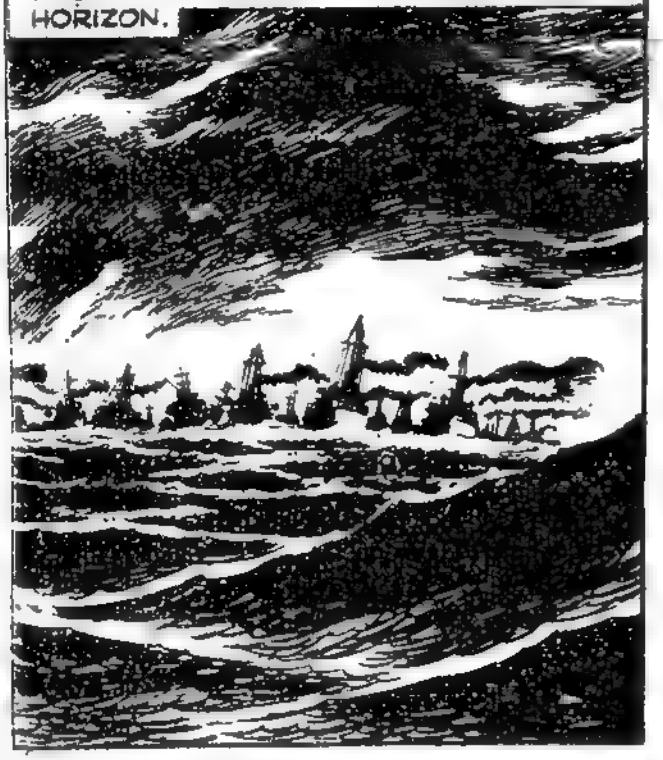
THE COMMODORE'S SHIP USUALLY TOOK POSITION MIDWAY BETWEEN THE WING COLUMN LEADERS, SO THAT HIS SIGNALS COULD BE SEEN BY ALL THE SHIPS IN THE CONVOY. THIS WAS COMMODORE OWEN'S PLAN FOR CONVOY E-THREE ZERO.
HMS
HOIST THE SIGNAL TO START ZIG-ZAG, YOUNG! SHIPS WILL ACKNOWLEDGE! ORDER WILL BE EXECUTED WHEN THE SIGNAL IS LOWERED!
AYE AYE, SIR!

COMMODORE OWEN WAS DOING EVERYTHING IN HIS POWER TO PROTECT HIS CHARGES BUT HIS EFFORTS WERE NOT APPRECIATED BY CAPTAIN PEARCE.
THERE THEY GO! LIKE A LOT OF BLESSED SHEEP!
SHEEP ARE SENSIBLE CREATURES, LET ME TELL YOU, CAPTAIN, IF THEY HUDDLE TOGETHER WHEN THERE ARE WOLVES ABOUT!

COMMODORE OWEN STUMPED EXPLOSIVELY OFF THE BRIDGE. LEAVING THE MERCHANT SKIPPER TO RELIEVE HIS FEELINGS IN A BITTER OUTBURST TO HIS THIRD MATE.
WOLVES, HE SAYS! WHY DIDN'T HE STAY RETIRED INSTEAD OF INTERFERING WITH REAL SEAMEN?
THERE MAY BE SOME POINT IN THIS CONVOY ROUTINE, ALL THE SAME, SIR!

MEANWHILE, ON THE FORWARD DECK, ANOTHER INCENSED OLD MAN WAS BITTERLY ADDRESSING ANOTHER MORE OPEN-MINDED YOUNGSTER.
STUBBORN OLD FOOL! WHY DOESN'T HE LEARN THAT WE'RE HERE TO PROTECT HIM AND HIS OLD TUB!
HMS
OH, WELL, SIR, THIS CONVOY STUFF MUST BE A BIT GALLING TO THESE INDEPENDENT OLD SEA DOGS!

ALL THAT DAY AND THE NEXT, THE CONVOY PLODDED ON AT SIX KNOTS ACROSS THE ATLANTIC. TOWARDS EVENING ON THE FIFTH DAY OUT FROM HALIFAX, BLACK CLOUDS BEGAN TO PILE UP ON THE EASTERN HORIZON.



THE SEA WAS ALREADY RUNNING HIGH. ON THE PITCHING DECK OF THE *LIVERPOOL COMMERCE*, THE TWO YOUNGSTERS EXCHANGED WORRIED BUT STUBBORNLY HOSTILE WORDS

WHEN CAPTAIN PEARCE REACHED HIS BRIDGE WITH HIS YOUNG THIRD MATE, THE NAVAL MEN WERE ALREADY THERE

YOU MAY HAVE, CAPTAIN PEARCE, BUT I'M THINKING OF THE SMALLER SHIPS! BY TURNING BACK WE CAN GIVE THE STRAGGLERS TIME TO CATCH UP AND KEEP THE CONVOY TOGETHER!
YOU MAY BE WORRIED BY A BIT OF SEA, MISTER OWEN, BUT I'M NOT! AND I'M NOT HEAVING-TO, EITHER!

THE SCORN IN THE OLD MERCHANT SEAMAN'S TOUGH VOICE, AS MUCH AS THE CHALLENGE OF HIS WORDS, ROUSED THE VETERAN NAVAL COMMANDER...
CAPTAIN PEARCE, IF YOU DISOBEY MY ORDER I'LL PUT YOU UNDER ARREST! AS COMMODORE OF THIS CONVOY, I HAVE THE POWER TO REMOVE YOU FROM YOUR BRIDGE, AND I'LL DO JUST THAT IF YOU ENDANGER THE CONVOY BY YOUR PIGHEADED SELFISHNESS!

IN THE EXPLOSIVE SILENCE, JOHNNY JOHNSON STEPPED SWIFTLY TO HIS CAPTAIN'S SIDE. THE MERCHANT SERVICE AND THE ROYAL NAVY FACED EACH OTHER TENSELY LIKE ENEMIES ACROSS THE NARROW DECK THEY HAD BEEN FORCED TO SHARE BY THE DESPERATE DEMANDS OF WAR.
WELL CAPTAIN ?
HOIST YOUR WEE FLAGS, COMMODORE ! I'M NOT ARGUING WITH A MAN WHO HOLDS A PISTOL AT MY HEAD !

AS SIGNALMAN TED YOUNG MOVED TO THE FLAG LOCKER, JOHNNY STOOD OVER HIM, HIS FACE DARK WITH ANGER AND HIS FISTS CLENCHED.
HOIST THE FLAGS, SIGNALMAN !
AYE AYE, SIR !
LEAVE HIM BE, JOHNNY BOY !

AS THE COMMODORE'S SIGNAL WHIPPED OUT FROM THE YARDARM OF THE *LIVERPOOL COMMERCE*, THE BATTERED SHIPS OF THE CONVOY TURNED LABORIOUSLY INTO THE TEETH OF THE GALE. ONE SHIP ONLY HELD HER COURSE....

THE *DEVON STAR*, A TANKER OF FIVE THOUSAND TONS, HAD IGNORED THE COMMODORE'S SIGNAL. FROM CAPTAIN PEARCE'S DELIGHTED REMARKS, IT SEEMED HER MASTER MUST HAVE DISOBEYED ORDERS DELIBERATELY.
SHE CAN'T HAVE SEEN THE SIGNAL, SIR! SHE'S STILL HOLDING HER COURSE!
THAT'S OLD YEO OF THE *DEVON STAR*! TRUST HIM TO GO HIS OWN WAY! EVER HEARD OF NELSON, MISTER OWEN?

COMMODORE OWEN'S FACE WAS GRIM...
YES, CAPTAIN, I'VE HEARD OF NELSON! HE WAS A GREAT NAVY MAN! CAPTAIN YEO MAY SHARE HIS BLIND EYE, BUT I'M AFRAID HE DOESN'T SHARE HIS WISDOM! LET THE DEVON STAR GO, SIGNALMAN, IF SHE WON'T HEED MY ORDERS!

WHILE THE REST OF THE CONVOY CLAWED BACK INTO THE HEART OF THE GALE, THE DEVON STAR SAILED ON ALONE BEFORE THE WIND.
WELL, COMMODORE, OLD YEO WILL BE WAITING FOR US WHEN WE GET TO LIVERPOOL, AND HOLDING HIS SIDES WITH LAUGHING AT US!
I WOULDN'T BE TOO SURE OF THAT, CAPTAIN PEARCE!

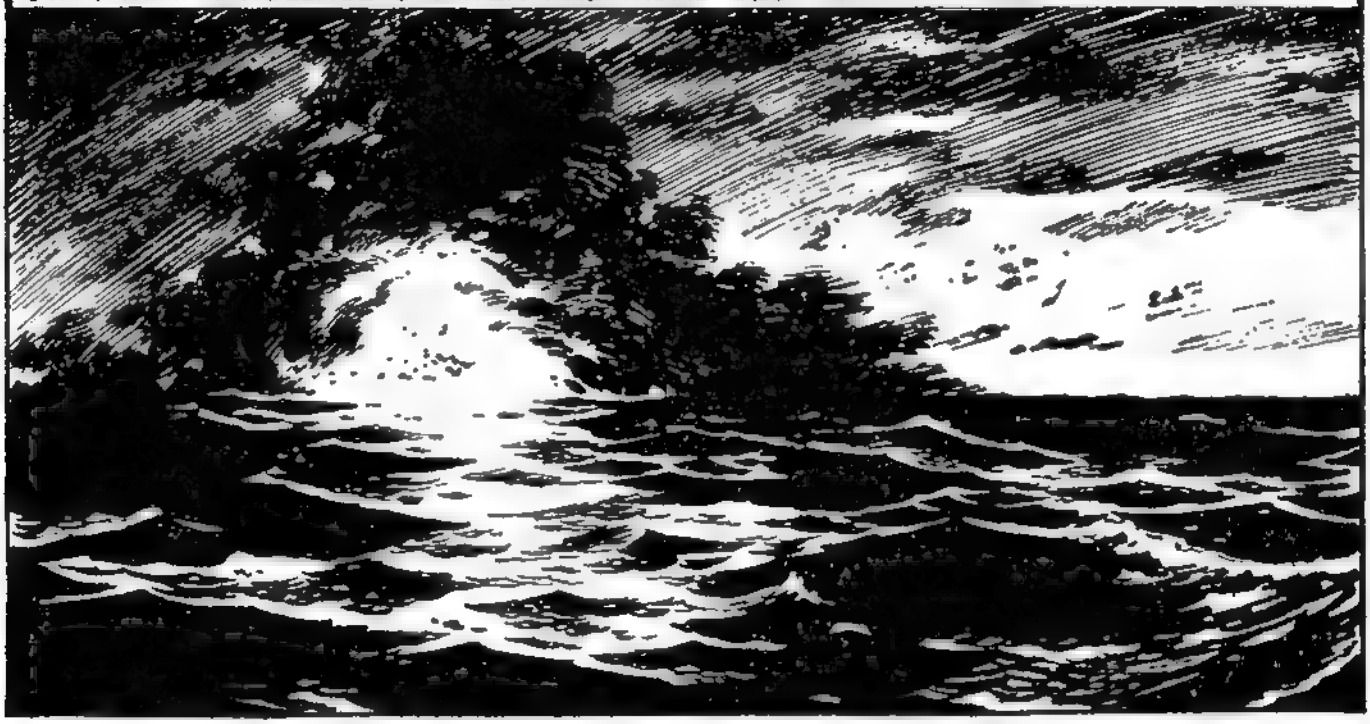
TED YOUNG FOLLOWED HIS SENIOR OFFICER FROM THE BRIDGE. WHEN JOHNNY JOHNSON CLIMBED DOWN TO THE DECK FIVE MINUTES LATER, HE FOUND THE SIGNALMAN STANDING BY THE RAIL.
DAMNED OLD FATHEAD!
SAY THAT AGAIN, NAVY!
HMI

THE NAVY MAN'S REMARK ACTED LIKE A SPARK ON THE THIRD MATE'S FIERCE PRIDE. BUT TED YOUNG WAS NOT INTIMIDATED BY THAT CLENCHED FIST...
I WAS TALKING ABOUT CAPTAIN YEO AS IT HAPPENS, MATE! BUT THE SAME GOES FOR ANY STUBBORN MULE OF A MERCHANT SEAMAN WHO THINKS HE CAN FIGHT THIS WAR ALONE!
HMS

THE SHARP BUT GOOD-HUMOURED VOICE OF THE YOUNG NAVAL RATING IMPRESSED JOHNNY JOHNSON DESPITE HIS ANGER. HAD LEADING SIGNALMAN YOUNG SPOKEN THE TRUTH?
I WONDER...

Chapter 3 FORTUNES of WAR

DURING THAT WILD NIGHT, THE STORM PASSED OVER THE BATTERED CONVOY AS IT HEADED INTO ITS PATH. BUT IN THE SHRIEKING DARKNESS, THE *DEVON STAR* MET A VIOLENCE GREATER AND MORE DESTRUCTIVE THAN ANY TEMPEST.



THE MEN ON THE BRIDGE OF THE COMMERCE STARED AHEAD TO THE EASTERN HORIZON AS THE CONVOY TURNED AGAIN ON ITS FORMER COURSE.
CONVOY S
RIGHT, S.R.!
KEEP A GOOD LOOKOUT AHEAD JOHNNY! WHATEVER T IS THAT BLEW UP, SHE CAN'T BE FAR AHEAD!

EYES ACHING, HEART HAMMERING WITH A FEAR WHICH EVEN HIS CAPTAIN WOULD NOT PUT INTO WORDS, THIRD OFFICER JOHNSON RAKED THE SEA AHEAD WITH HIS BINOCULARS. TWO HOURS LATER...

THE SHIP AHEAD WAS SWALLOWED IN LURID FLAME. ONLY ONE KIND OF SHIP'S CARGO COULD HAVE FED THOSE THICK AND GREASY CLOUDS OF BLACK SMOKE—CRUDE OIL!
HAVE A LOOK, CAP'N!
I DON'T NEED THOSE THINGS, JOHNNY! THAT'S THE *DEVON STAR*, AND WE ALL KNOW IT!

THE OIL TANKER *DEVON STAR* HAD BEEN ALONE. WITHOUT HINDRANCE FROM THE OTHER SHIPS, THE U-BOAT HAD STALKED HER PREY AT WILL. A SINGLE TORPEDO HAD STRUCK HOME AMIDSHIPS.
STAR

THERE WAS LITTLE CHANCE FOR THE TANKER'S CREW IN THAT SEA OF FLAMING OIL. ONLY A HANDFUL OF DESPERATE MEN WERE STILL ALIVE TO SEE HELP CLOSE AT HAND.
MAY I LOWER A BOAT TO PICK UP SURVIVORS, COMMODORE — IF THERE ARE ANY?
OF COURSE, CAPTAIN! LET THE CONVOY KNOW WHAT WE'RE DOING, SIGNALMAN!

THERE WAS A NEW DEFERENCE IN THE OLD SEA-DOG'S VOICE AS HE MADE THAT REQUEST AND A NEW SYMPATHY IN THE COMMODORE'S AS HE AGREED TO IT. GENTLY, THE COMMERCE NOSED IN AMONGST THE OILY WRECKAGE.
EASY NOW, MATE!

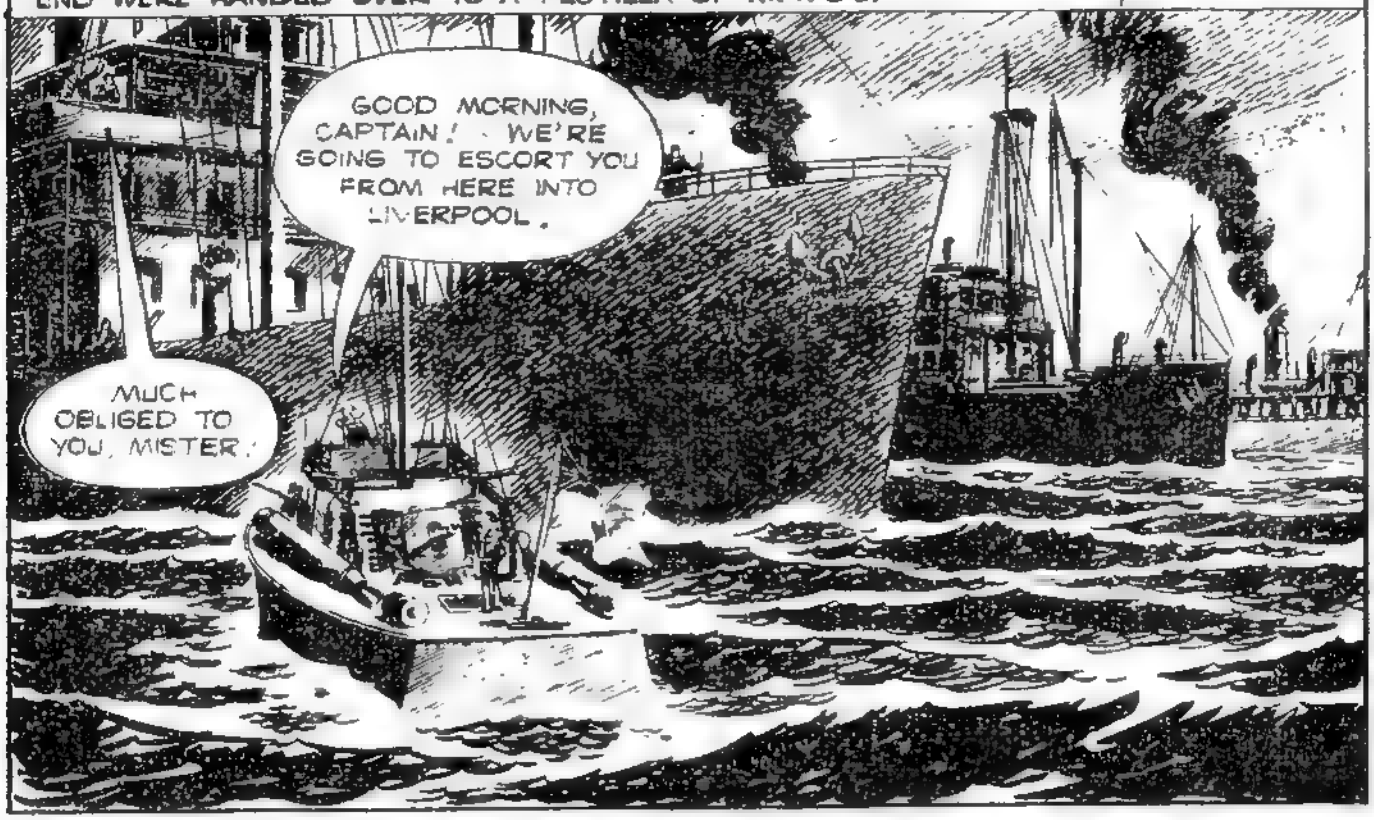
THE TWO YOUNGSTERS HAD WORKED SIDE BY SIDE FOR TWO HOURS TO SUCCOUR THE U-BOAT'S VICTIMS. NOW THEY FACED EACH OTHER GRIMLY.
ONLY FIVE SURVIVORS! GO AHEAD AND SAY 'I TOLD YOU SO!' NAVY!
NOT ME, MATE! I ONLY WISH THE STAR HAD GOT THROUGH ALONE AND PROVED ME WRONG!

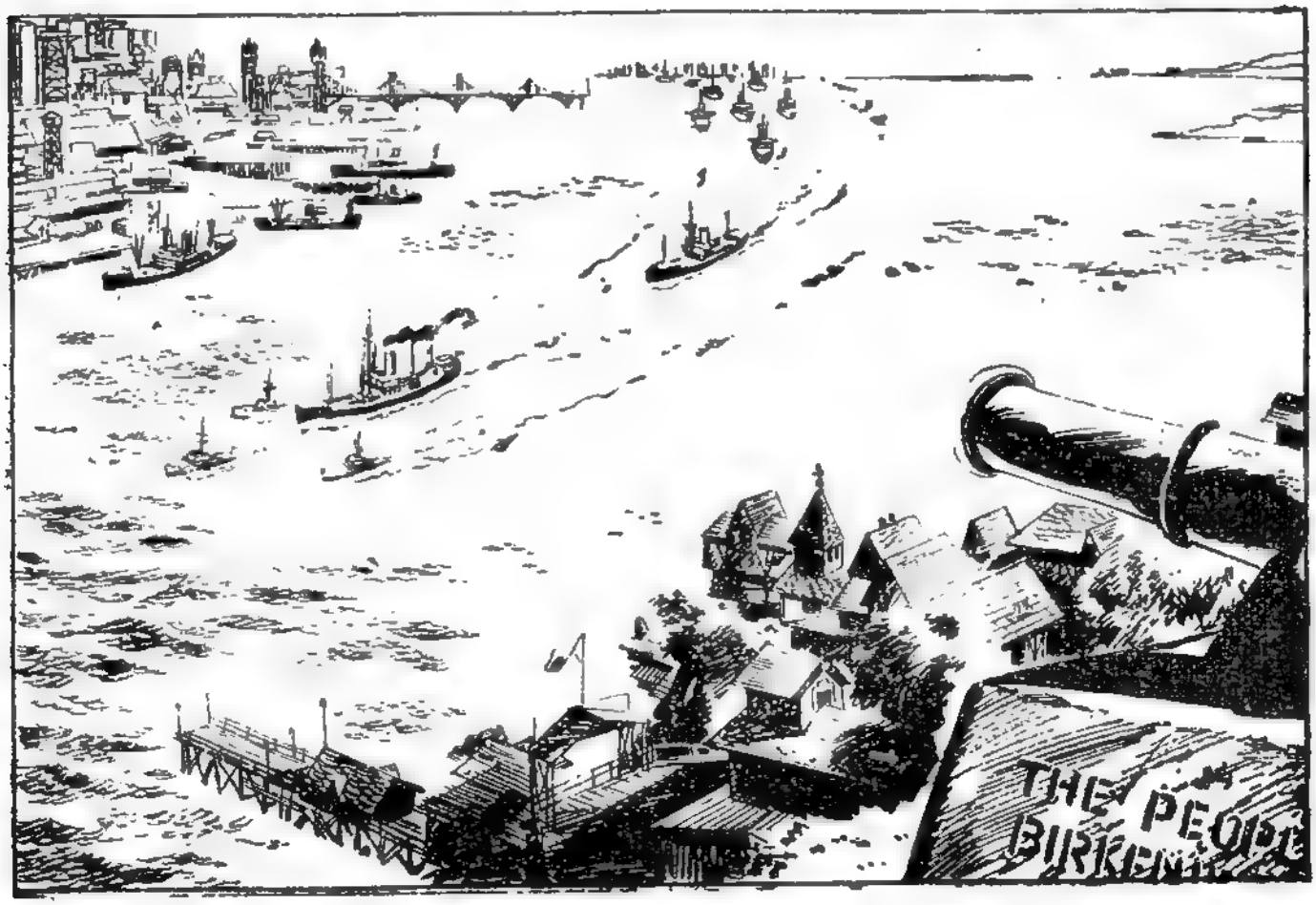
ON THE BRIDGE, TWO OLD MEN EXCHANGED A FEW BRIEF BUT DEEPLY-FELT WORDS.
POOR OLD YEO! YOU HAD THE LAST LAUGH ON HIM, MISTER OWEN!
I'M NOT LAUGHING, CAPTAIN PEARCE! YOU'VE LOST A FRIEND AND I'VE LOST A SHIP! I FEEL AS BITTER AS YOU DO!

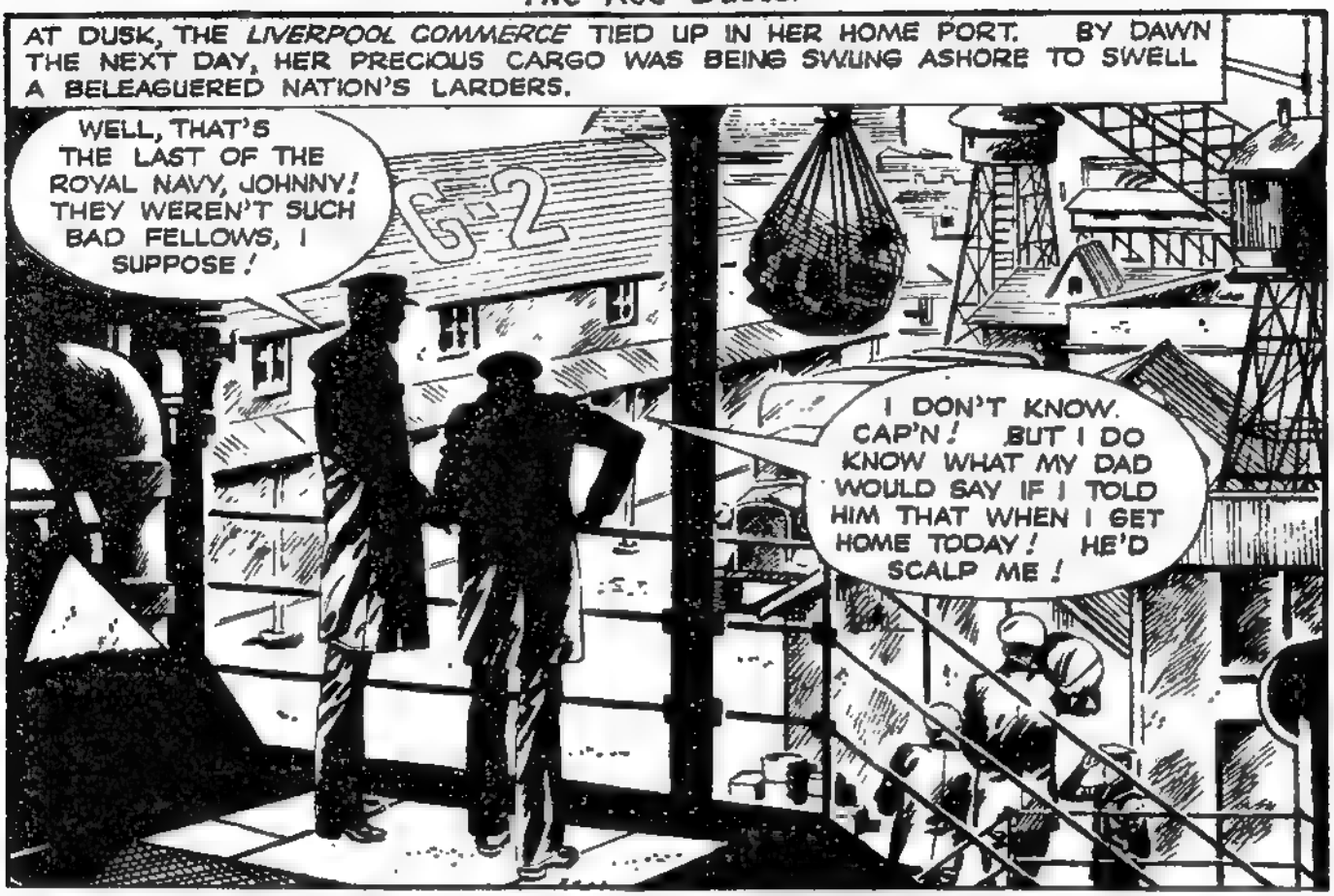
THE VETERAN MERCHANT SKIPPER TURNED AND LOOKED SQUARELY AT THE NAVAL OFFICER WHOSE PRESENCE ON HIS SHIP HE HAD SO DOURLY RESENTED. THERE WAS RESPECT IN HIS VOICE.
AYE, COMMODORE, I BELIEVE YOU! I'M THINKING PERHAPS I SHOULD HAVE BELIEVED YOU EARLIER! WELL, OUR PLACE IS WITH THE CONVOY AND WE'D BEST REJOIN IT!

THE TRAGIC FATE OF THE *DELTA STAR* HAD NOT WEAKENED CAPTAIN PEARCE'S STURDY INDEPENDENCE, BUT IT HAD MADE HIM FACE THE STARK REALITY OF WAR AT HIS COMMAND THE *LIVERPOOL COMMERCE* STEAMED EASTWARD TOWARD THE CONVOY.

FOR TWO-MORE DAYS, THE MERCHANT SHIPS PLOUGHED THROUGH THE UNEASY AFTERMATH OF THE GALE. AT DAWN, FOUR HUNDRED MILES FROM LAND'S END, THEY PICKED UP THEIR ESCORT OF DESTROYERS AND WHEN THEY NEARED LAND'S END WERE HANDED OVER TO A FLOTILLA OF M.T.B'S.






AT DUSK, THE *LIVERPOOL COMMERCE* TIED UP IN HER HOME PORT. BY DAWN THE NEXT DAY, HER PRECIOUS CARGO WAS BEING SWUNG ASHORE TO SWELL A BELEAGUERED NATION'S LARDERS.
WELL, THAT'S THE LAST OF THE ROYAL NAVY, JOHNNY! THEY WEREN'T SUCH BAD FELLOWS, I SUPPOSE!
I DON'T KNOW. CAP'N! BUT I DO KNOW WHAT MY DAD WOULD SAY IF I TOLD HIM THAT WHEN I GET HOME TODAY! HE'D SCALP ME!

EVENTS HAD MELLOWED THE CAPTAIN'S ATTITUDE TO THE COMMODORE AND THE SIGNALMAN, BUT THIRD OFFICER JOHNSON KNEW HIS FATHER'S EXPLOSIVE VIEWS ON THE ROYAL NAVY TOO WELL TO BELIEVE THAT ANYTHING HE COULD SAY WOULD CHANGE THEM.
HAVE A GOOD LEAVE, JOHNNY! AND GIVE MY REGARDS TO CAPTAIN JOHNSON!
HEY, MATE!

THINKING UNEASILY ABOUT HIS FATHER, THE YOUNG MERCHANT SEAMAN WALKED OFF THE JETTY, OBLIVIOUS OF THE SIGNALMAN'S SHOUT. HE TOOK A BUS AT THE PIERHEAD TO A MERSEYSIDE SUBURB. AS HE NEARED HIS HOME...
POST OFFICE
I'VE CHASED YOU HALF ACROSS LIVERPOOL, MATE!
WHAT'S WRONG?

JOHNNY STARED WITH SURPRISE AT THE SIGNALMAN'S CHEERY FACE.
THERE'S NOTHING WRONG, MATE — AT LEAST, I HOPE THERE ISN'T! I JUST WANTED TO SAY CHEERIO! NO HARD FEELINGS, ARE THERE?
HMS
BRST EWELL
OF COURSE THERE AREN'T, NAVY! IF IT WEREN'T FOR MY DAD, I'D ASK YOU TO OUR PLACE FOR A DRINK! IT'S ONLY ROUND THE CORNER! BUT DAD'S GOT A THING ABOUT THE NAVY!

A SUDDEN AWKWARDNESS CHECKED THE YOUNG SEAMAN'S IMPULSIVE FRIENDLINESS FOR THE WARM-HEARTED NAVY MAN. BUT TED YOUNG WAS ALREADY LOOKING PAST HIM...
DID YOU SAY ROUND THE CORNER, MATE?
GREAT HEAVENS! IT'S BEEN BOMBED!

THE TWO YOUNGSTERS RAN TO THE CORNER OF THE STREET. THE RAGGED GAP IN THE TERRACE OF HOUSES AND THE HEAP OF SMOKING RUBBLE TOLD THEIR OWN TERRIBLE STORY.
YOU WON'T DO ANY GOOD, THERE'S NO ONE ALIVE IN THERE—WE'VE LOOKED! THE PLACE WAS ONLY BOMBED THREE HOURS AGO, IT'S DANGEROUS!
OUT OF OUR WAY, MATE! MY PAL'S FATHER IS IN THERE SOMEWHERE!

THAT NIGHT, ONE OF THE FIRST SPORADIC BOMBS DROPPED ON THE SEAPORT HAD SHATTERED AN INNOCENT HOUSE AND BURIED AN OLD MAN IN ITS DUSTY RUIN. FEVERISHLY, THE TWO YOUNG SEAMEN TORE WITH THEIR BARE HANDS AT THE RUBBLE.
JOHNNY— HERE!

IT WAS TED YOUNG WHO HEARD THAT FAINT CRY FROM BENEATH THE BAULK OF TIMBER. MIRACULOUSLY, IN A TINY GAP UNDER THAT HEAVY BEAM....
ALL RIGHT, DAD, I'VE GOT YOU!
IT'S YOU, SON! HEAVEN BE PRAISED!

THE VETERAN SEAMAN WAS CARRIED TO A STRETCHER. HIS DOGGED OLD EYES TURNED TO THE WEARY BLUEJACKET WHO STOOD OVER HIM...
IT WAS MY PAL HERE WHO FOUND YOU, DAD!
A MATELOT, EH? WELL, I'VE CURSED THE ROYAL NAVY ALL MY LIFE, BUT THEY'RE THE BOYS TO HAVE WITH YOU WHEN YOU'RE IN TROUBLE! THANKS, SON!

THE TOUGH OLD SEA-DOG WAS TAKEN QUICKLY TO HOSPITAL. WHILE HIS SON FOLLOWED THE DOCTORS, TED YOUNG WAITED ANXIOUSLY IN AN ANTE-ROOM. AT LAST...
IT'S OKAY, TED! DAD'S GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT—THANKS TO YOU!
I'M GLAD, JOHNNY.

CAPTAIN JOHNSON'S FEW WORDS OF THANKS TO THE NAVAL SIGNALMAN HAD RELEASED HIS SON FROM THE MERCHANT SERVICE'S TRADITIONAL HOSTILITY TO THE ROYAL NAVY.

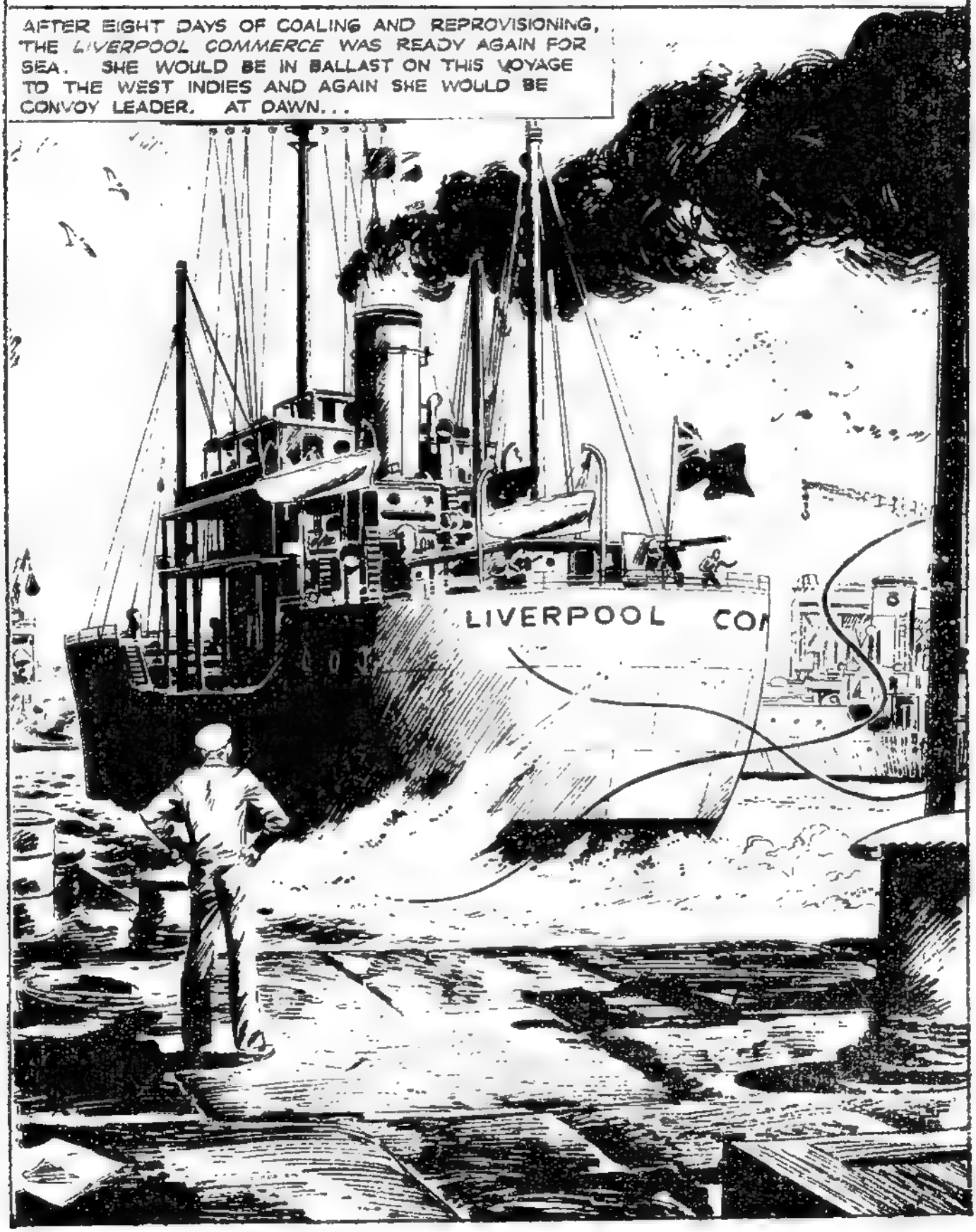
THE VOICE WHICH HAILED THE TWO YOUNGSTERS FROM THE GANGWAY OF THE *LIVERPOOL COMMERCE* WAS EAGER WITH NEWS. AND IT WAS WELCOME NEWS...

WONDERING, TED YOUNG AND JOHNNY JOHNSON CLIMBED THE GANGWAY TO JOIN THEIR SENIOR OFFICERS.
WE'RE GOING BACK TO THE CARIBBEAN IN CONVOY, MY BOY! AND THE COMMODORE'S FLYING HIS PENNANT IN THE OLD COMMERCE! HE JUST CAN'T DO WITHOUT US!
IT WASN'T MY DOING, CAPTAIN PEARCE! THE ADMIRALTY DECIDED THAT AS I'D SAILED WITH YOU BEFORE, I WAS THE BEST MAN TO TAKE THE CONVOY SOUTH!

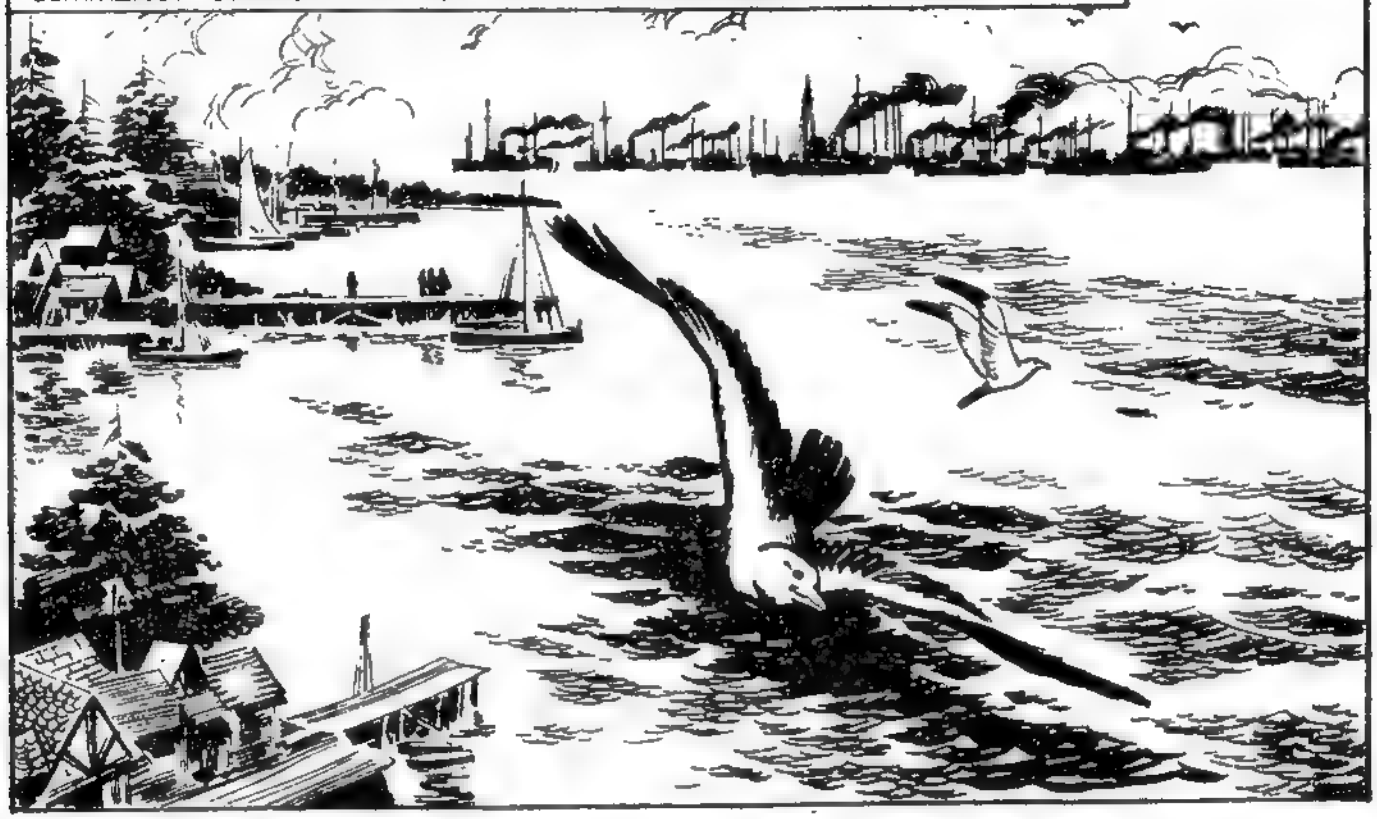
THERE WAS A ROUGH FRIENDLINESS IN THE VOICES OF THE TWO VETERAN SEAMEN. BUT JOHNNY KNEW THE OBSTINACY OF HIS CAPTAIN...
YOUR OLD MAN AND MINE ARE MORE PLEASED ABOUT THIS THAN THEY'LL ADMIT, JOHNNY!
MAYBE, TED! BUT IT'LL TAKE MORE THAN A FEW WORDS TO CONVINCE CAPTAIN PEARCE THAT IN WARTIME EVERYONE WORKS FOR EVERYONE ELSE! WE'RE AN INDEPENDENT LOT OF CUSSES IN THE MERCHANT SERVICE!

I'M GLAD YOU'RE TAKING IT LIKE THIS, CAPTAIN!
DON'T BE TOO GLAD, MISTER OWEN! I STILL DON'T LIKE TAKING ORDERS FROM THE NAVY, BUT I'D RATHER HAVE YOU GIVING THEM THAN ANY OTHER NAVY MAN I'VE KNOWN!

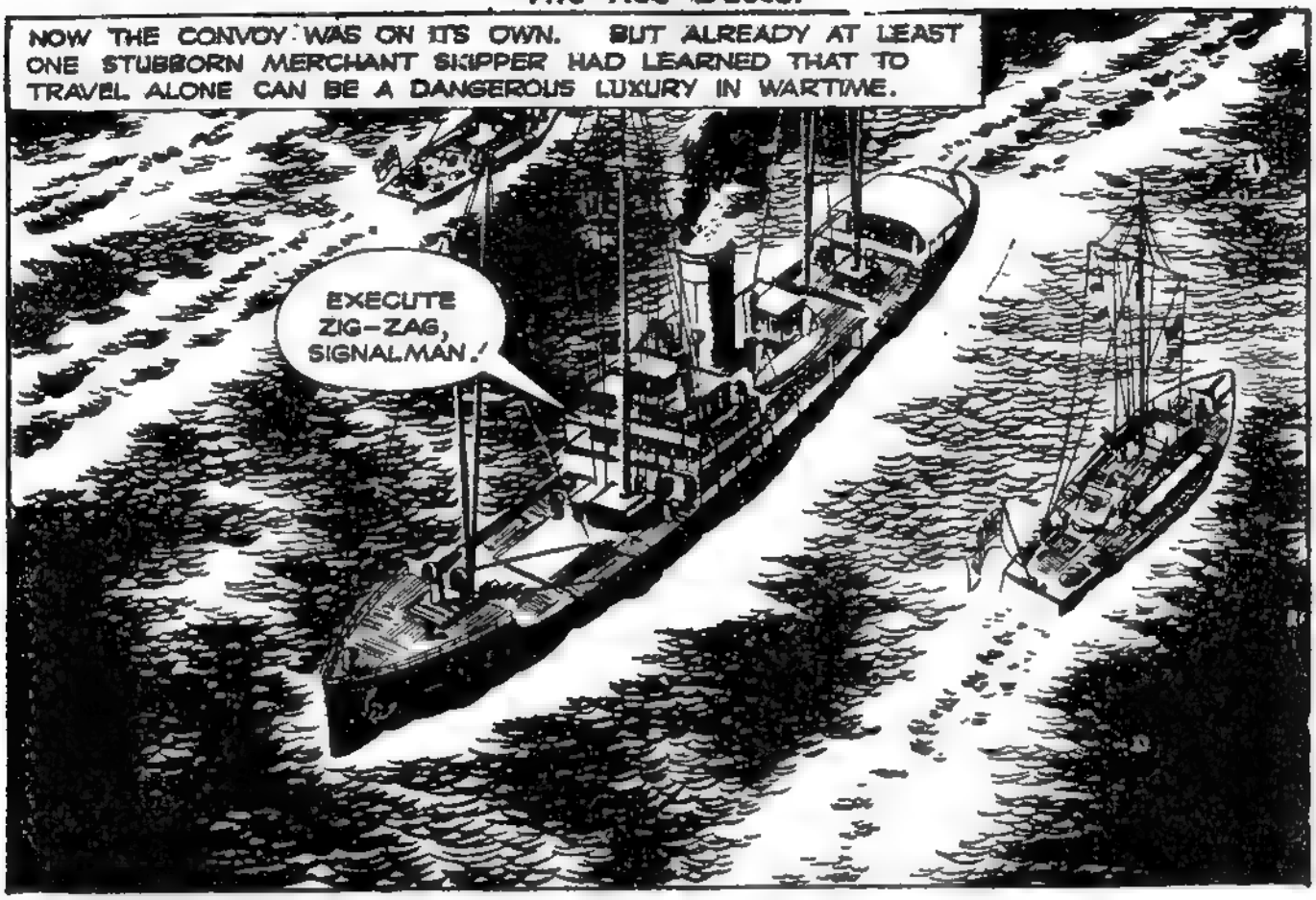
Chapter 4. FIGHTING MERCHANTMAN



SLOWLY, UNDER HER PILOT'S ORDERS, THE FREIGHTER NOSED OUT INTO THE MERSEY AND LED THE COLUMN OF MERCHANTMEN TOWARDS THE SEA. AS THE SUN SET, THE FLAGS ON THE YARDARM OF THE *COMMERCE* BROUGHT THE CONVOY INTO DEFENSIVE FORMATION.

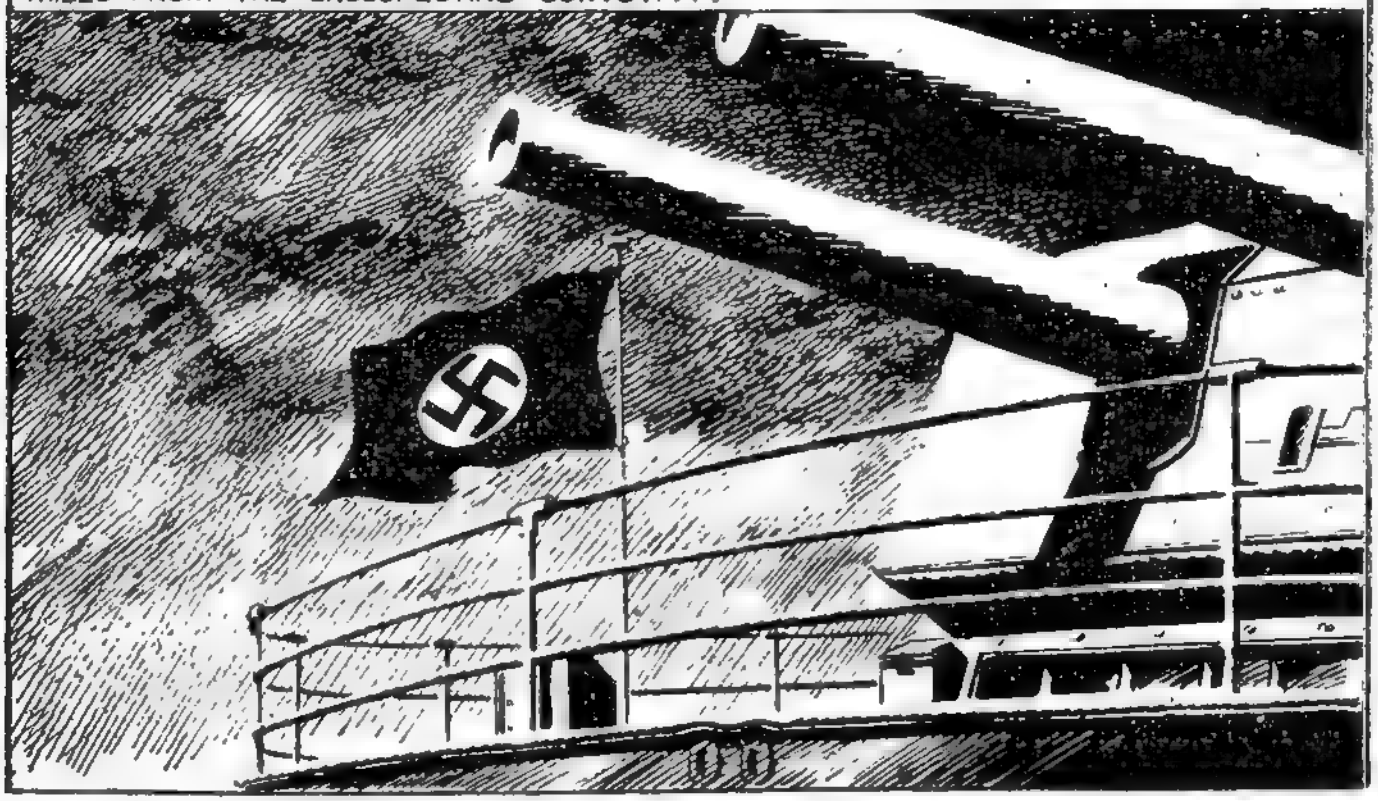


THE M.T.B. ESCORT TOOK THE CONVOY BEYOND THE NARROW HOME WATERS WHERE THE U-BOATS, AT THAT PERIOD OF THE WAR, WAITED FOR EASY KILLS. BUT ALL TOO SOON....

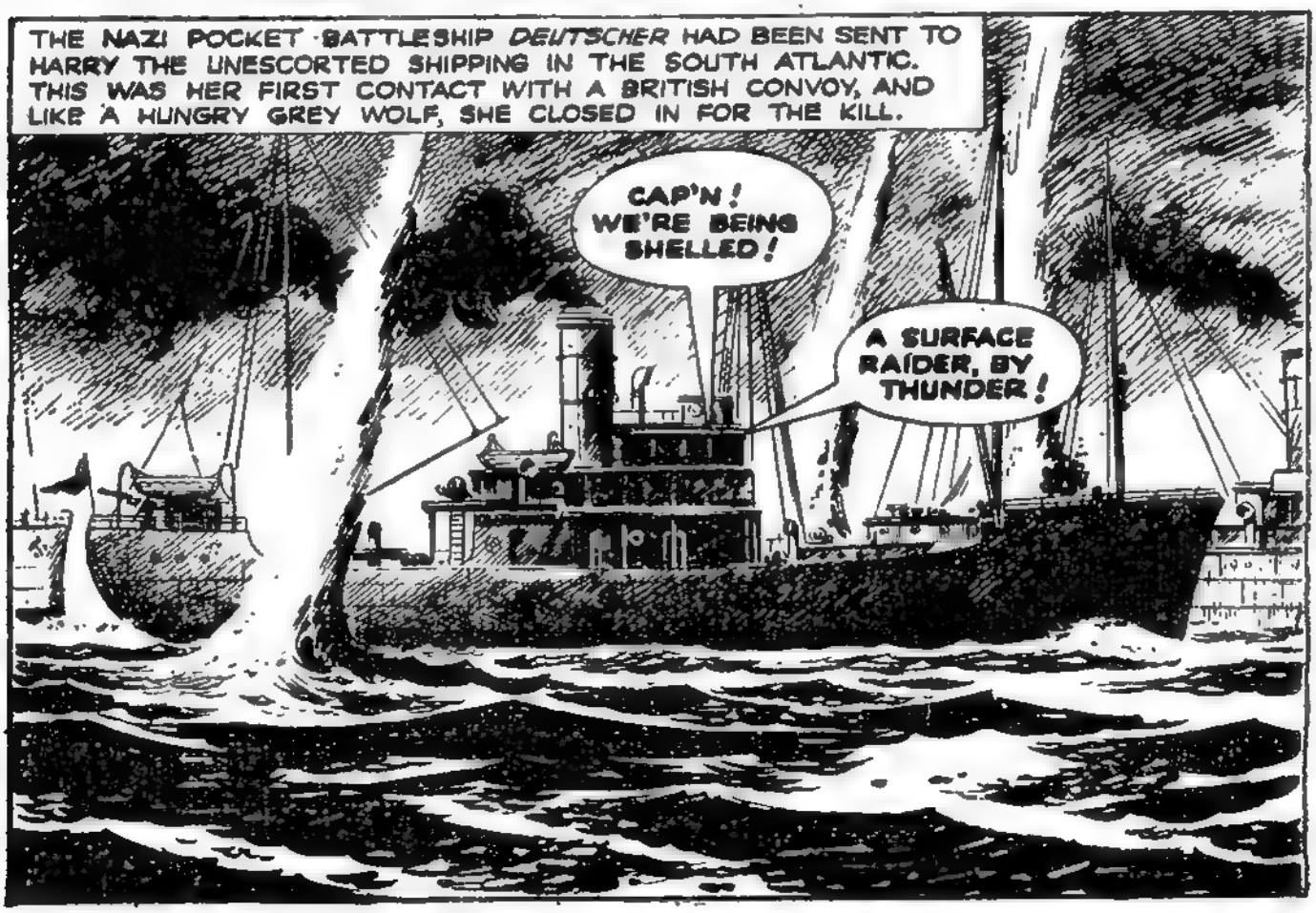

NOW THE CONVOY WAS ON ITS OWN. BUT ALREADY AT LEAST ONE STUBBORN MERCHANT SKIPPER HAD LEARNED THAT TO TRAVEL ALONE CAN BE A DANGEROUS LUXURY IN WARTIME.
EXECUTE ZIG-ZAG, SIGNALMAN!

FOR MANY DAYS AND NIGHTS, THE CONVOY MADE ITS UNEVENTFUL WAY TOWARDS SOUTHERN LATITUDES. THE TENSION RELAXED...
SIX HUNDRED MILES TO GO, TED! THERE CAN'T BE MANY U-BOATS THIS FAR SOUTH! IT LOOKS LIKE BEING AN EASY TRIP!
DON'T SAY THINGS LIKE THAT, MATE! IT'S TEMPTING FATE!

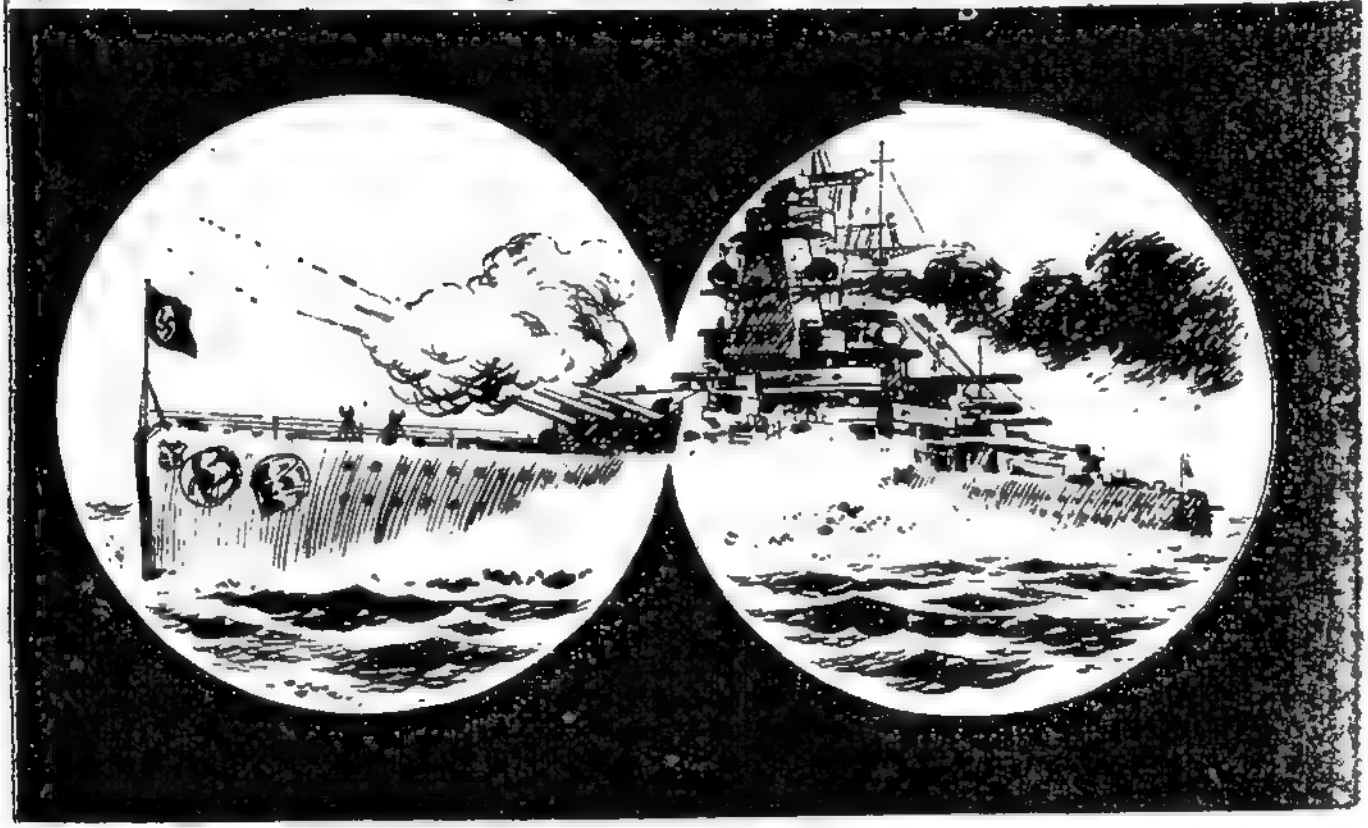
FEW U-BOATS COULD HAVE PENETRATED TO THESE WATERS FROM THEIR NORTH GERMAN BASES. BUT THEY WERE NOT HITLER'S ONLY WEAPON IN HIS MERCILESS WAR ON BRITAIN'S MERCHANT SHIPPING. AT THAT MOMENT, LESS THAN FIFTY MILES FROM THE UNSUSPECTING CONVOY. . . .



THE NAZI POCKET-BATTLESHIP *DEUTSCHER* HAD BEEN SENT TO HARRY THE UNESCORTED SHIPPING IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC. THIS WAS HER FIRST CONTACT WITH A BRITISH CONVOY, AND LIKE A HUNGRY GREY WOLF, SHE CLOSED IN FOR THE KILL.



A SALVO OF SIX-INCH SHELLS, PLUNGING INTO A CALM SEA, WAS THE CONVOY'S FIRST WARNING THAT THEY WERE UNDER ATTACK. MINUTES LATER, THROUGH HASTILY-GRABBED BINOCULARS, THEY SAW THEIR ATTACKER...

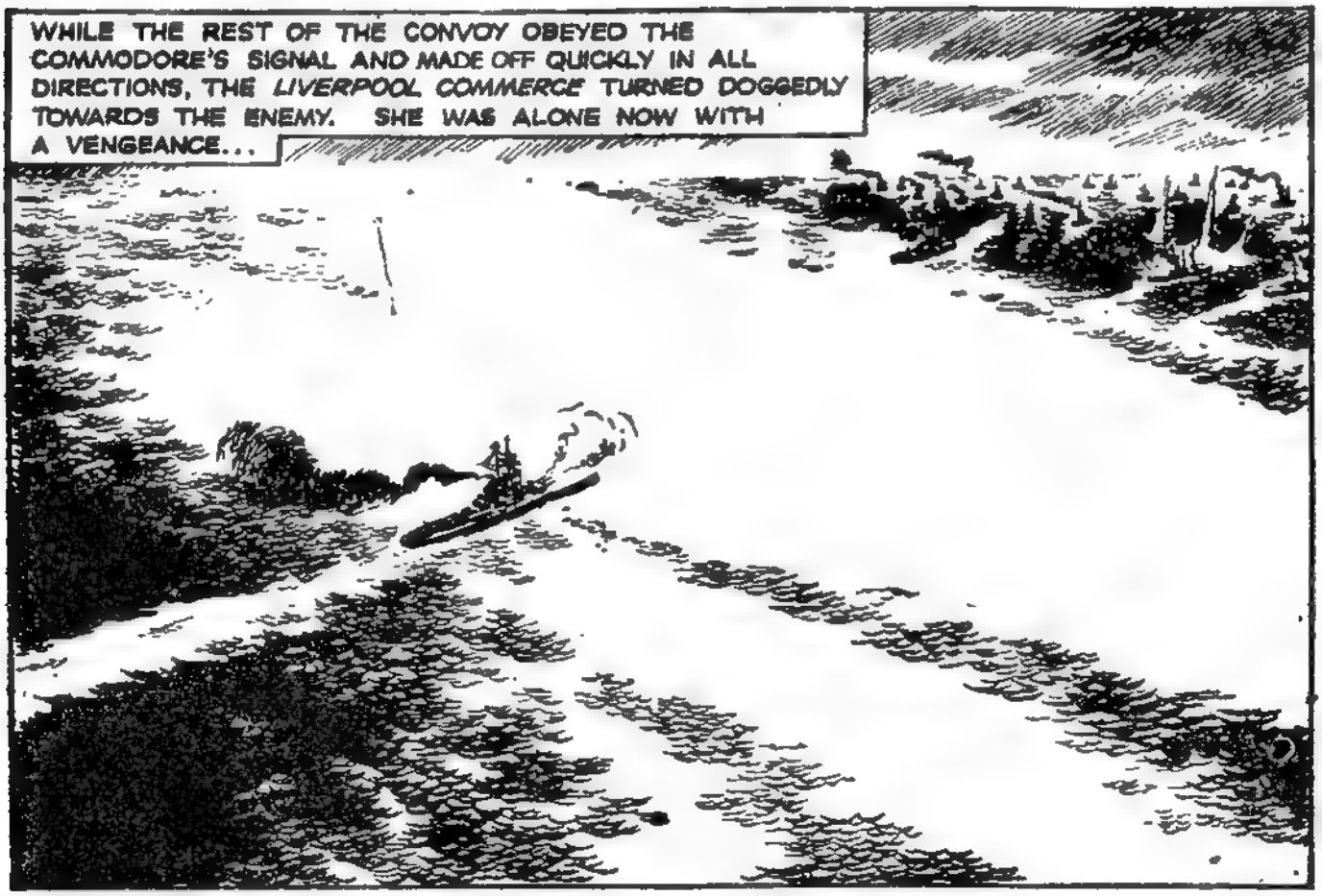


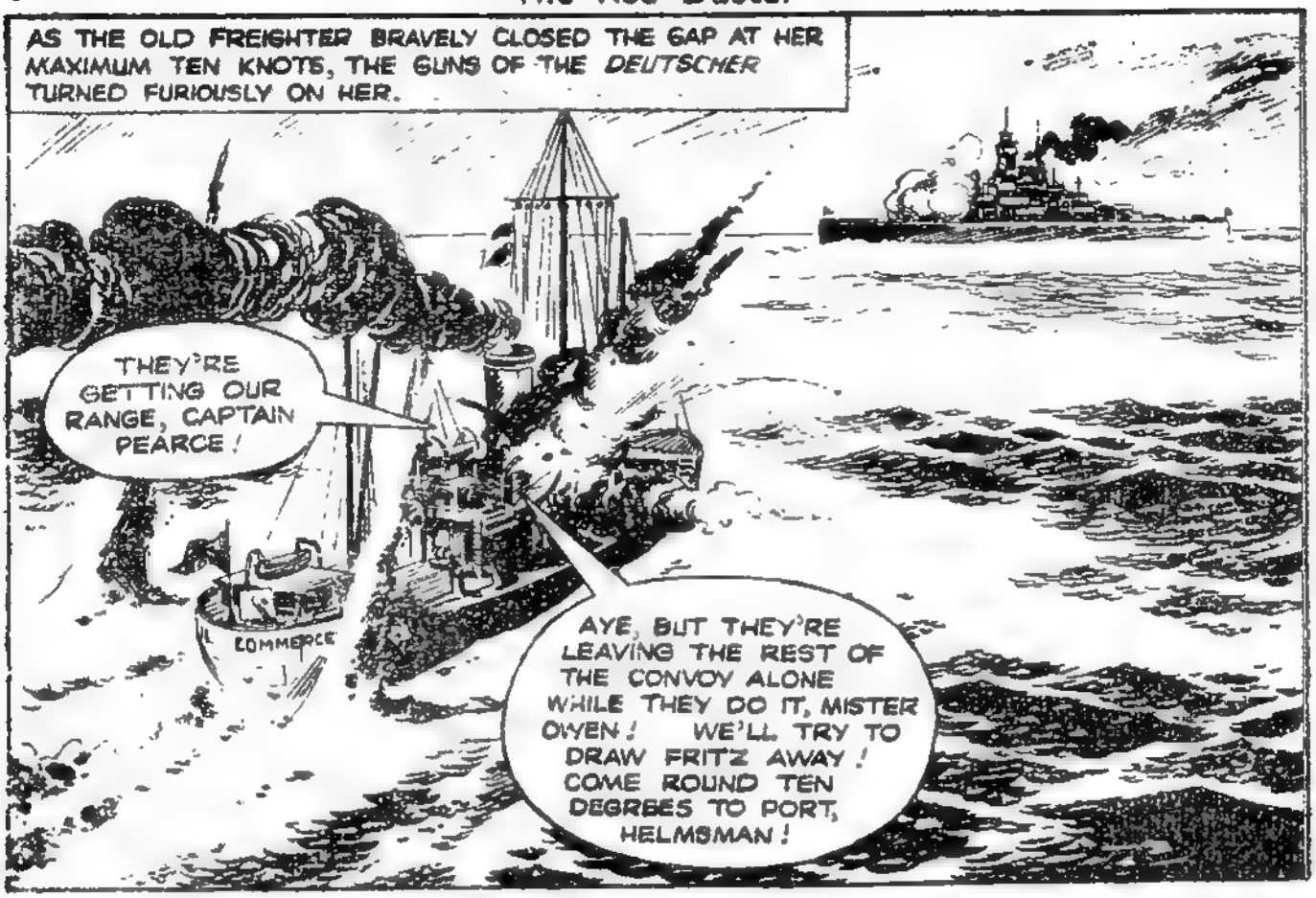
THE GERMAN BATTLESHIP WAS CLOSING RAPIDLY WITH THE CONVOY. ALREADY ITS SHELLS WERE BRACKETING THE NEAREST MERCHANT SHIPS. SWIFTLY, COMMODORE OWEN GAVE THE ONLY POSSIBLE ORDER...

CAPTAIN PEARCE HEARD THOSE WORDS WITH A SUDDENLY-DAWNING SMILE ON HIS RUGGED FACE.
I'M IN SOLE COMMAND OF MY SHIP NOW, AM I, MISTER OWEN ?
YOU ARE, CAPTAIN PEARCE! A CONVOY IN FORMATION WOULD BE SUNK WHOLESALE BY THAT JERRY RAIDER! IF THIRTY SHIPS SCATTER AT THEIR BEST SPEED INDEPENDENTLY, SOME ARE BOUND TO ESCAPE!

THE OLD MERCHANT SEAMAN GRINNED BELLIGERENTLY....
SO I'M INDEPENDENT AT LAST! AND I'VE THE FASTEST SHIP IN THE CONVOY AND THE ONLY ONE WITH A GUN ABOARD! WELL, I ALWAYS WANTED TO GO IT ALONE, AND NOW, BY HOOKEY, I'M GOING TO!

NOW THE FATE OF THE *LIVERPOOL COMMERCE* WAS IN THE HANDS OF ITS INDEPENDENT OLD CAPTAIN. THE DECISION WAS HIS ALONE... AND FIRMLY HE MADE IT.
RMS
ALTER COURSE TO STARBOARD, HELMSMAN! HEAD STRAIGHT FOR THAT RAIDER! WE'RE STILL CONVOY LEADER! IF WE CAN MAKE FRITZ DEAL WITH US FIRST WE CAN GIVE THE REST OF THE SHIPS A CHANCE TO ESCAPE!


WHILE THE REST OF THE CONVOY OBEYED THE COMMODORE'S SIGNAL AND MADE OFF QUICKLY IN ALL DIRECTIONS, THE *LIVERPOOL COMMERCE* TURNED DOGGEDLY TOWARDS THE ENEMY. SHE WAS ALONE NOW WITH A VENGEANCE...


AS THE OLD FREIGHTER BRAVELY CLOSED THE GAP AT HER MAXIMUM TEN KNOTS, THE GUNS OF THE *DEUTSCHER* TURNED FURIOUSLY ON HER.
THEY'RE GETTING OUR RANGE, CAPTAIN PEARCE!
COMMERCE
AYE, BUT THEY'RE LEAVING THE REST OF THE CONVOY ALONE WHILE THEY DO IT, MISTER OWEN! WE'LL TRY TO DRAW FRITZ AWAY! COME ROUND TEN DEGREES TO PORT, HELMSMAN!

THIS WAS WHAT CAPTAIN PEARCE HAD COURAGEOUSLY PLANNED. THE FIRE OF THE GERMAN RAIDER WAS CONCENTRATED NOW ON HIS OWN SHIP WHILE THE OTHER SHIPS OF THE CONVOY SCATTERED TO THE WEST.
JERRY'S COMING ROUND! WE'RE DRAWING HER OFF!
YOU'RE DOING THAT ALL RIGHT, JOHNNY! AND WHATEVER HAPPENS, I'M DARNED PROUD TO HAVE SAILED WITH THE MERCHANT NAVY!

THE *DEUTSCHER* CHECKED HER HIGH SPEED ATTACK ON THE MAIN CONVOY AND TURNED TO CLOSE WITH THE PUNY FREIGHTER WHICH HAD DARED TO CONFRONT HER.
HERR KAPITAN, THE CONVOY IS MAKING ITS ESCAPE!
THE CONVOY CAN WAIT! WE WILL DISPOSE OF IT LATER! FIRST WE MUST SINK THIS IMPUDENT FOOL OF AN ENGLANDER WHO SAILS ACROSS OUR BOWS!

THE GERMAN CAPTAIN ANGRILY CHECKED HIS SPEED AND TURNED ON *THE LIVERPOOL COMMERCE*. FIFTEEN MILES AWAY TO THE EAST...
YOU'RE RIGHT, SIR! THAT'S GUNFIRE AHEAD!
WE'VE CAUGHT UP WITH THE *DEUTSCHER* AT LAST, BY THUNDER! SIGNAL *MERCIA* AND *WESSEX*, NUMBER ONE! OPEN FIRE AS SOON AS WE CLOSE RANGE!

THREE BRITISH CRUISERS HAD BEEN HUNTING THE GERMAN RAIDER FOR MANY WEEKS. NOW FATE, AND THE UNSELFISH COURAGE OF A TOUGH OLD MERCHANT SEAMAN, HAD GIVEN THEM THEIR CHANCE. BUT ON THE SORELY STRICKEN COMMERCE..
HEY, GUNNERS! WE'RE ABANDONING SHIP!
COMING, MISTER JOHNSON! SMITH HERE SWORE HE'D LOOSE OFF ONE ROUND AT THAT HULKING JERRY!

EVEN AS HER CREW LEAPED FROM THE BLAZING AND SHATTERED FREIGHTER, THE ONLY SHELL SHE HAD BEEN ABLE TO FIRE STRUCK A TINY BUT DEFIANT BLOW AT HER GIANT ADVERSARY.
YOU HIT THE BRUTE, SMITHY!

THE *LIVERPOOL COMMERCE* WAS LISTING STEEPLY. SMASHED BY THE BRUTAL FIRE OF THE HUGE WARSHIP, SHE SEEMED TO CLING TO THE GREY SURFACE SHE HAD PLOUGHED ACROSS FOR SO MANY YEARS.
COME ON, CAPTAIN, HURRY!
COMING, MISTER OWEN! LET ME TAKE A LAST LOOK AT THE OLD GIRL!

THE WILLING HANDS OF COMMODORE OWEN HELPED THE VETERAN MERCHANT SEAMAN INTO A BOAT. NOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO MEN HAD BEEN BURNED AWAY IN THE FIRE OF BATTLE.
WELL, CAPTAIN, YOU MADE A DARNED GOOD FIGHT OF IT!
THANK YOU, COMMODORE! COMING FROM THE NAVY, THAT'S ALL THE PRAISE I NEED!

THE FOUR MEN ROWED DESPERATELY AWAY FROM THE DEADLY DRAG OF THE SINKING SHIP. AND WHEN THEY LOOKED UP TOWARDS THEIR GREAT EXECUTIONER...
SHE'S TURNING AWAY FROM THE CONVOY, CAP'N!
LOOK — LOOK! SHE'S BEING SHELLED!

THE THREE CRUISERS HAD CLOSED WITH THE *DEUTSCHER* WHILE SHE HAD BEEN ENGAGED IN HER VENGEFUL SLAUGHTER OF THE LITTLE FREIGHTER. NOW THE GERMAN BATTLESHIP TURNED HURRIEDLY AWAY FROM THE DEADLY ACCURACY OF BRITISH GUNS...
WHOEVER THAT MERCHANTMAN WAS, SHE KEPT THE *DEUTSCHER* WAITING FOR US!

EVEN AS THE CRUISERS FASTENED LIKE PANTHERS ON THEIR HUGE QUARRY, A STURDY BRITISH MERCHANT VESSEL WAS IN HER DEATH THROES.

THE MEN IN THE BOAT HAD TURNED AWAY FROM THE DRAMA OF BATTLE.
CHEERIO, OLD GIRL!
BE PROUD OF HER, CAPTAIN! SHE SANK SO THAT THE CONVOY SHE LED COULD GET THROUGH!

THE LIVERPOOL COMMERCE HAD GONE DOWN TO A HEROIC GRAVE. FOR THE MEN WHO HAD SAILED IN HER, RESCUE WAS AT HAND...
CAN YOU SEE WHO'S IN THAT BOAT, LOOK-OUT? THERE WERE NAVY CHAPS SAILING WITH THAT CONVOY!

Printed in England by Messrs. Percy Brothers Ltd., Manchester 1, and published each month by Fleetway Publications Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Advertisement Offices: Tallis House, Tallis Street, London, E.C.4. Sole Agents: Australasia, Messrs. Gordon & Gotch Ltd.; South Africa, Central News Agency Ltd.; Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Messrs. Kingstons Ltd. WAR PICTURE LIBRARY is sold subject to the following conditions, that it shall not, without the written consent of the Publishers first given, be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of by way of Trade except at the full retail price as shown on the cover; and that it shall not be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of in a mutilated condition, or in any unauthorised cover by way of Trade; or affixed to or as part of any publication or advertising, literary or pictorial matter whatsoever.

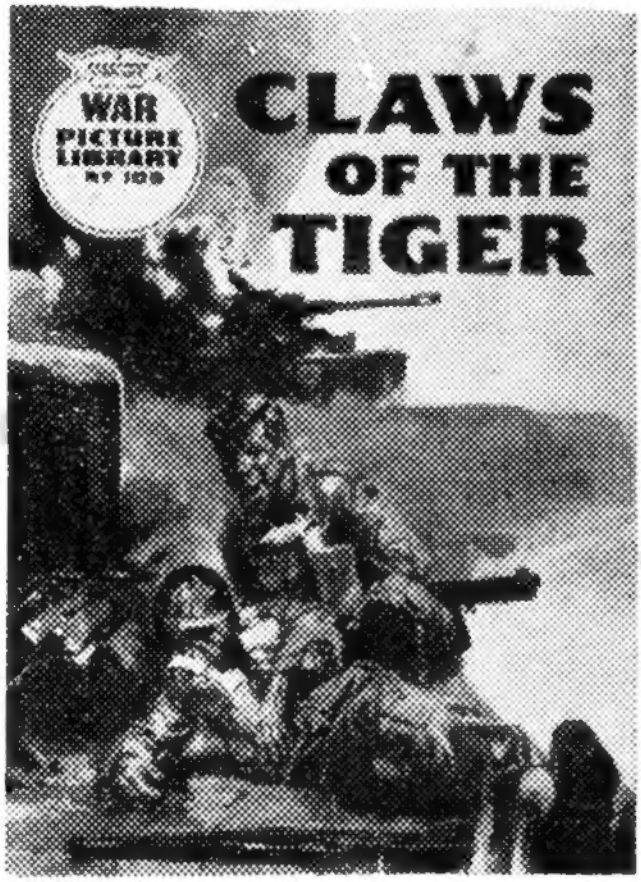
7/8/61

ALSO ON SALE NOW

FOR WAR THRILLS . . . ACTION . . . DRAMA . . .

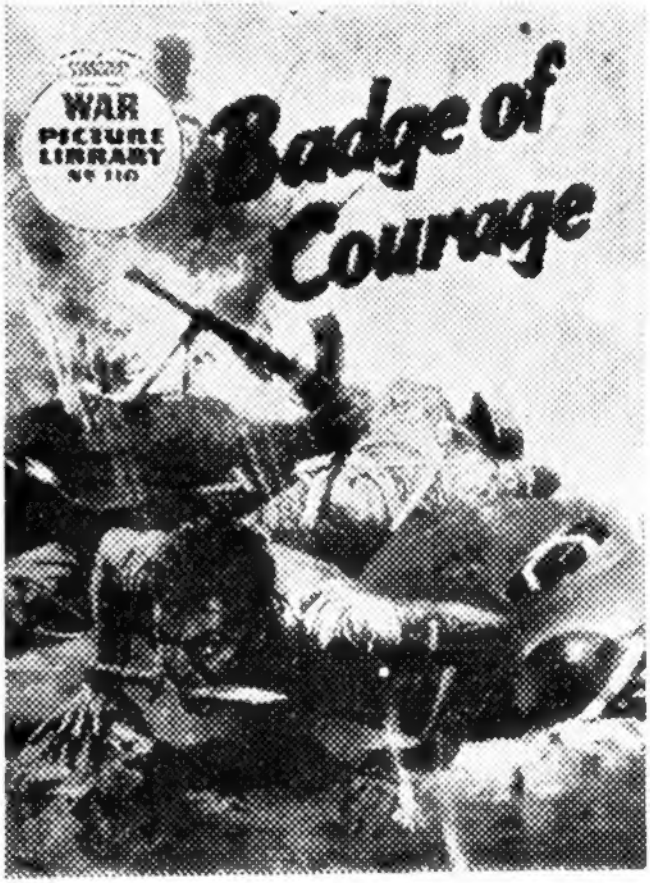
WAR PICTURE LIBRARY

No. 109.—CLAWS OF THE TIGER



The fearsome roar of the Tiger tanks' guns echoed like a death knell across the battlefields of Europe.

No. 110.—BADGE OF COURAGE



The rare gift of leadership is often tempered to hardness in the white-heat of battle.

ALSO ON SALE NOW :—

No. 108.—THE KILLING GROUND

Next month's **FOUR** thrilling **WAR PICTURE LIBRARY** issues, on sale September 4th, are :—

No. 112.—CEILING ZERO
No. 113.—ATTACK !
No. 114.—CRY DEFIANCE !
No. 115.—THE RANKS OF THE DAMNED

LARGE ALBUM

& Stamp Collection

ALL ONLY 1/- WORTH 5/6

1. LARGE ILLUSTRATED STAMP ALBUM. Spaces for thousands of stamps from all over the world. Interesting "extras" include coloured reproductions of great rarities; photos of famous collectors. Better than albums sold for 2/- to 3/6 everywhere.

2. IMPORTED COLLECTION OF STAMPS. Exciting issues! FIRST SPACEMAN STAMP. MONACO — Grace Kelly Wedding. FRENCH ANTARCTICA — Fantastic new country. RED CHINA — Liberation Imperforate. ESTONIA—Nazi Occupation. GREECE—Earthquake. SPAIN—Hungarian Revolt. NAZI—Military Airmail. Dozens of other fascinating and unusual stamps from all over the world. Totals 58 different stamps — enough for an interesting start to this great hobby.

3. PLANET MAIL SHEET AND BOY SCOUT JAMBOREE SHEET. 2 smashing souvenirs (not stamps) that will be the prizes of your collection!

ALL 3 LOTS—REGULAR VALUE 5/6—YOURS FOR JUST 1/- TO INTRODUCE OUR BARGAIN APPROVALS. ***(APPROVALS ARE STAMPS SENT TO YOU FOR FREE INSPECTION. BUY WHAT YOU WANT. RETURN THE REST IN 14 DAYS.)***

SEND 1/- TODAY. ASK FOR LOT P2. Satisfaction Guaranteed.

I enclose 1/-. Rush me the Lot P2 Stamp Album and Souvenir Sheets. Also a selection of Bargain Approvals for free examination.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

.....

SEND COUPON TODAY TO:

BROADWAY APPROVALS,
50, DENMARK HILL,
LONDON, S.E.5.